

Q and A with Eckhart Tolle TV Part 1

[Speaker 1] (0:22 - 14:19)

We are just becoming comfortable with the present moment, an unusual state of consciousness for still the majority of the population on the planet. Becoming comfortable with the present moment. Sounds very simple and is very simple.

But to the complicated and complicating mind, it's the most difficult thing. Because the mind immediately asks, how do I do that? It equates becoming comfortable with the present moment with some kind of doing.

Not realizing that becoming comfortable with the present moment concerns being, which is prior to any doing and more vitally important. And you can't really reach being, not reach, become aware of being by any kind of doing. It's prior to any doing, the very foundation.

Well, that's a relief. We don't need to do anything. We can just be.

Now to the mind, that's almost meaningless. Or it will immediately ask, what do you mean just be? If I just be, I'll never do anything again.

Of course, that's not the case. Becoming comfortable with the present moment is becoming comfortable with who you are right now. The essence of who you are, not some thought structure that tells you who you are, but something more vital.

The aliveness of who you are, that which underlies any thought structure or any thought movement, that is already there. We can use different pointers to point to that, but it has to be a realization in you now, not a conceptual thing, not based on conceptual understanding, a deeper realization of your own, your very presence here that is prior to thoughts that arise out of that. So we need to be very careful with words.

I say, can you sense the presence that you are, one could say, as a little pointer. And the answer to that then requires no thinking. You can't say, oh, let me think whether I can sense the presence that I am.

Let me think about that. No, can't. Of course, you can't through thinking.

No. It's only for a moment, thinking must come to a stop. There's a cessation in the stream of thinking.

For example, now. In that cessation of the stream of thinking, don't worry, you're going to think again after that. You're not going to abdicate all that your critical abilities and all the accumulated knowledge, it's all going to still be there.

Okay, so that's okay then, you don't have to worry about it. But in that moment of

cessation of thinking, what is left, like now, I do this because by moving my hands in this way, I'm opening up that space, so to speak, symbolically, or maybe even energetically, who knows. Opening up that space where there's a moment of cessation of thinking and just being, presence, awareness, without content.

And you are still yourself, you have not lost your identity, although you don't remember in that moment, you don't remember your past, or not even your phone number, not even your name or your address. You don't remember it in that moment, and you don't need to know who you are. You don't need to remember what happened to you when you were a little child, or what happened to you in your last marriage to tell you who you are.

So there's an essence of identity here that is not based on past or anything that happened to you in the past, any story in your mind, because the memory, your past consists of stories in the mind, and perhaps some emotional reactions to the stories in the mind. And yet that's not the, where does the sense of the preciousness of who you are, that the thing that nobody wants to lose, there's a deep, some kind of deep realization that there's something precious that I am, and that's, people think, I'm going to lose that, I'm going to lose my life. But of course, you can't lose your life because you are life.

It's only because the mind has created a duality between life and me that you think you can lose your life. Here's me, and I have a life. No, because without life, who is there?

There can't be anybody without life. You are life. It's a mind-created duality that creates a lot of fear and misperception.

I am life. So can you sense the life that you are prior to anything that can form, any thought movement prior to that, to the life? I am, that's the mystical I am.

Beingness, presence, awareness, consciousness, these are just pointers to it. And it's joyful to know yourself as that, rather than the problematic personality that, of course, we also all still carry around with us. Everybody carries around a problematic personality and life situation.

But that is not the essence of who you are. If that obscures the essence of who you are, then you're lost in the world, in your mind, which is the world, because you only know the world through the mind. It's quite liberating.

You're not that which you carry around with you in your mind, or even in your emotional field. Prior to that, there's something more vital. I am, presence, the light of consciousness itself, which is ultimately divine, although I try to avoid too much of that terminology, but it is.

So here we are, here to realize that, right now. So simple, we don't need to do anything

to be who we are. I need, let's put it in the first person, I don't need to do anything to be who I am.

So there is already a fullness there, and you don't need to even be deserving to be who you are, or do this or that. There is already the fullness of being there, here, there. And the rest is the play of form, playing around with creating forms, moving about the world, enjoying it.

So fearfully, quite a few people have been asking whether the world is coming to an end in a couple of years or so, 2012. Now, I have a little message for the future. The future, which doesn't exist, except as the present moment.

So here's the message, it's for the person who is watching us here, a recording of this in the year 2013. And that person who is watching this in the present moment, of course, it's not the future at all, because there is no future, ever, as an experience, you can't experience the future. So here's, hello, 2013, you already know that the world didn't end, right?

Okay. Or perhaps all the recordings are going to dissolve in the year 2012. I don't often make predictions for the future for the simple reason that in ultimate terms, there is no future.

Only in conventional terms, there is a level. So we can all, just to exemplify what I've just said, in ultimate terms, there is no future, in conventional terms, there is a future, you can verify that for yourself. In conventional terms, we are here for a certain period of time, and then we are going to walk out of here and take a break, have a cup of tea.

So that's going to happen. It looks like the future, that's conventional reality. In ultimate terms, you will never experience what I just described as the future.

The only way you can experience what I just described, spending some time here and then walking out of here and taking a cup of tea, you can only experience that in the present moment, never as the future. There is no such thing as experiencing the future. It's never, it's never, future is never here.

It's only ever in the mind. So that's just so that there's no, we don't need to philosophize about that because it's so immediately obvious that there is, in ultimate terms, no future. Because otherwise, you could actually say, oh, here it is.

This applies to the past too, but let's not go there now.

[Speaker 11] (14:20 - 14:21)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (14:25 - 15:04)

So nevertheless, I'll make a prediction now. Conventional reality prediction about the end of the world. Everybody who is on this planet alive now, billions of people, everybody, is going to be wiped out within the next 80 or 90 years.

[Speaker 11] (15:08 - 15:09)

Everybody.

[Speaker 1] (15:12 - 1:06:08)

It's a dreadful thing. Complete extermination of all humans who are on this planet now within a few years, ultimately. Let's be generous and say, okay, 90.

Well, then maybe a few little children make it to 100 years from now, but that's it. Hmm. Oh, well, the mind says, yes, but there will be others who are born.

Tomorrow's people will be born and they will still be around a day later. Well, that's true, but again, talking in conventional terms, that doesn't help you, does it? It's just a comforting thought in your head.

There'll be others after me. Okay, big deal, but you'll be gone and everybody else wiped off the planet, gone through some dreadful disease. And it's called death.

And associated with it, old age, sickness, accidents. Wow. So that's the end of the world, as far as you are concerned.

It's not that dreadful, is it? I saw a science fiction film some years ago, but it might have been Star Trek. I'm not sure what it was.

There was a time traveler and the time traveler arrived from the so-called future, arrived in present day somewhere on the planet. In order to witness it, they found out, they met him and they realized he came from the future. And then he was explaining reluctantly, he gave them the reason why he had arrived from the future and he had arrived to witness some kind of disaster that was going to happen in a couple of days or so that would kill millions of people.

And he was there just as an interested observer, because there were historical records in the future about this disaster that killed millions of people. And they said, well, maybe we can prevent it. They talked, said to him, we have to do something.

And he said, no, there's no way you can prevent it. He said, and they asked him, don't you want to do something about it? He said, no, because you're all dead already.

To him, because he came from another time period, so to speak, everybody who was here had already died a long time ago. He was visiting the past. Why am I telling that story?

Because the life of form is so short-lived, fleeting, ephemeral, and whatever other words I can find in the dictionary, the life of form is so impermanent that it might be a good idea to think of yourself as dead already. I'm basically, there's so little left that I'm basically, that's already, it's already over. Is that a negative thing?

Well, perhaps to the mind. But basically, I'm giving you that not as a literal thing, something to believe in. I'm not believe that you're dead already, no, it's just a suggestion of an inner an attitude to life, which it's a relinquishment of attachment to the forms of life, including the physical form of the body and whatever other forms you experience around you as your life.

When you feel yourself that I'm basically, it's so short, this life, I'm basically, it doesn't really matter that much what happens here. You detach from the forms and there comes a liberation when you're dead already. For example, one way of being dead already is not to judge what happens, because if you're dead already, you don't need to judge what happens.

And that's a great liberation. You're here, okay, I'm dead already, it doesn't matter. You don't judge what happens, and with not judging what happens, something in you dies.

What is it that dies? The one that judges. The personality part of you that lives through reaction and judgment, that wants to keep itself alive, that wants to continuously assert itself as me, I'm still here alive.

And the more you react against something, the more you feel yourself as your form identity, psychological form, even physical form. Sometimes when people are very reactive, you can see how they emphasize even their physical presence in an argument or whatever. Or when they get angry, this is where the old TV series, The Incredible Hulk, is based on that.

You get angry, your form gets inflated. And some people would love that. This is why they love watching The Incredible Hulk.

They're even now still replaying it on TV. This person, when he gets angry, he gets huge. And he can, very powerful.

Oh, everybody wants that. So there's an egoic need to emphasize your form identity, physical form, but more importantly, psychological, the psychological form of me. So when you can be reactive about complaining about this or that, looking for something, a critical thing, disagreeing and identifying with your mental positions, then you strengthen the psychological form of the me.

That basically means you're definitely not dead. You want to emphasize that you are here as the form. And the more you emphasize your form, in ancient Chinese Taoist philosophy, I think they have the image of the mountain and the image of the valley.

Now, most people want to be mountains. And that is, you emphasize your form identity. And the more you emphasize your form identity, your psychological form identity, the me, the more you lose touch with your essence identity, that which is beyond form, that which is formless, that which we could call the valley, the depths of who you are, beyond the personality, the little personality.

Even the big personalities, the VIP personalities are really all little me's, just inflating, being inflated for a little while until they are wiped off the planet sometime between now and 90 years time. All with a little pinprick, they all get deflated by death. Choo, choo, choo.

What I'm saying is threatening to the form identity, but it's comforting and something else within you, ah, it actually feels liberating. It's the liberation from form identity. And that's a wonderful thing.

And so, when I say you're already dead, or you can go through life as if you were already dead, all that means is you can be here as a deeper presence than just the defined presence of the personality and the mind, the egoic self. There can be a depth to who you are. So, that which dies is the form, because only a form can dissolve.

The form dies. Death is the form dissolving. So, this is here to be experienced as an actual experience.

What does it, can you experiment with that in daily life and go through somebody, go through life as someone who is already dead? And this is just a way of putting it. Non-judgment of the present moment, that's all, just the present moment, just let it be, let it be as it is, because it is already.

Then you don't emphasize, if you don't react against it, you don't emphasize the me, you become the valley, deep. So, through relinquishment of reactivity, you become what you already are, which is deep, but you didn't know it. Depth arises, and that depth is more than just depth, it's just a word.

There's intelligence there, there's aliveness there, there's wisdom. Out of that depth, life arises. Forms can arise out of that depth.

You become a different entity when you access the dimension of depth in you. Now, the entire world still, whatever you watch on TV, you very hardly ever hear of that. Maybe very late at night, at two o'clock, they might put something on, or probably not.

When that gets activated, you become a different entity, you embody a different, completely different energy here. You become connected with something that is deeper than, it's your own depth, and it goes beyond what is yours. You connect with the very depth of life itself.

And, of course, that is a life that is eternal. It's not the forms of life, because you no longer need to emphasize the form of me. Then you can begin to sense that which is beyond form in you, and it is peaceful, it is powerful.

Then that gives you, that substitutes, I may talk some other time about, often people ask about self-esteem, and I may talk about that some other time. But that becomes what, in conventional reality, is called self-esteem, which is, in conventional reality, self-esteem means you compare yourself to others mentally, and you're not that bad. There are many who are worse than you.

That's the basis for self-esteem, is you have to compare yourself. I'm actually quite good at that and better than most, so that gives you yourself. Nothing wrong with that, it's conventional reality.

I'm not saying, and I certainly wouldn't tell a child who suddenly was able to do something and is proud of doing that, say, don't do that. No, that's all fine. But at some point, we graduate, and we go beyond that conventional reality where we no longer need to derive our sense of value or worthiness from the fact that we, in some areas, are better than others, or others are worse off than we are, or we have achieved more than others, because that always comes in.

On that level, to have self-esteem, you need to compare yourself, and you need others who are less than you. That's fine. It's a temporary thing.

Eventually, humans are meant to go beyond that and to arrive at a place of value or worthiness that is infinitely deeper than anything that self-esteem, in conventional terms, could give you. But it is not based on comparison. It is not based on being better than somebody else and others being worse than you.

It comes out of a non-conceptual place. It is the preciousness and the power of life itself, of which you, as this physical body, are only just a temporary expression, a temporary manifestation. But that which underlies the temporary manifestation is eternal.

It is the one. It is life itself. The one becomes the many, or seems to become the many, in this reality.

Without but remaining at the core of each being as the one. You are that. You can then sense how precious you are.

Instead of self-esteem, I don't know whether I would still call it self-esteem. We probably need a different word for this now. Whatever.

I said precious, so why not say preciousness at the core? There was a movie recently about precious. I haven't seen it yet.

It's about this young girl who does not look attractive, but what I believe the movie is about is the covering that although the external side may not be attractive, there is a preciousness in her. Maybe her name is precious, but really what it points to, I believe, is the preciousness in all that is hiding in each form. So to sense that, then you don't, once you sense that, you don't need to compare yourself to others to get some sense of uplift or, in some cases, feel downtrodden because you definitely have less money than those people and definitely are not as good as this and then those experts or definitely, whatever, not as glamorous as the people in Magazine and you don't also do not need, as some people live through, fictitious stories in their mind of how great they are. To combat an underlying feeling of insufficiency, they have to say, I'm the unrecognized genius.

I'm so great I've never created anything because I'm beyond all that. I'm far greater than any genius who ever lived. You could do that as a story to combat an underlying feeling of not being good enough and then you will attack everybody else.

Whatever it is, all that is based on mind movement and even if it has a basis in reality, maybe you are the greatest musician in the world or whatever, all you are, but if you are truly a creative being, then it is more likely that you will have humility about it because you realize you didn't create it, not you as the person created it, it was given to you. You became an instrument for that. It arose out of the depths of your being and then took form and you know full well that you cannot say, I did that, because the moment you said, I did that, it would lead to a blockage because you emphasize the former identity.

You can only then continue to be creative by being in touch with that, not emphasizing the former. In some artists and other creative people, there is a fight between former identity trying to take credit and then the creative impulse or the creative moment in which that is relinquished and then the creation comes through. Some creative people are schizophrenic almost between the egoic identity wanting to take credit and then again the other, the power coming through them and some people get destroyed by the conflict between the two.

It doesn't have to be like that. Some creative people remain humble. A great example is Albert Einstein who just was the most simple person, humble person.

He didn't identify with what he created. He didn't think, even think of himself as so great. He said it's absurd what people think of me.

It has no basis in reality and he said things, I'm just slower than others so I take more time dwelling on these questions and he was able to go into stillness, go for long walks, not a stressed-out researcher. Okay, we have to meet these deadlines now. No, he was, he had a boring job in the patent office and so because he had a boring job, he had no deadlines, he was able just to, and then in his spare time he went for walks and then it came.

Oh, it came to him. So the end of the world then is something really not that bad. It's something that can happen within you.

Let the end of the world be inside you, then you don't need to fear the end of the world out there. And if one more people live as if they were dead already, which means not living through ego anymore, not living through attachment to form anymore, then actually, paradoxically, the world is going to improve because it'll reflect your state of consciousness. Now you may know that there've always been movements, millennial movements or whatever they're called, that predicted the end of the world and whenever there's something on television about predictions about the end of the world, many people watch it or books that are published continuously about the end of the world.

People, for some reason, people love that. There's fear but there's more than fear. There's something draws them to the end of the world.

They want to know more. Oh, when is it going to happen? There is, why is that?

You can perhaps even observe it in yourself sometimes when you see on TV at 10 o'clock they're going to talk about the end of the world that had been predicted for a long time. Okay, let's watch that. Why?

What is it? There is something inside humans that actually longs for that. There's another side that fears it.

But there's one side that loves to hear about it once. When is it coming? Because there is a promise there almost that the forms, what is the forms that seem to be so limiting in your life, all the problems from the end of the world, there's no more IRS.

That's one thing that happens, part of the end. Wow. Wall Street, gone.

Stock market, gone. Everything, all that, your mortgage, no longer relevant. Your battles in your office, dissolve.

All the problems with your wife or husband, dissolve. All the problematic things in the world of form, dissolve. All that which people regard as a limitation on them because in everybody's life, everybody has a life situation, has certain circumstances surrounding them that are perceived as limiting.

You can in some areas of your life temporarily open up certain perceived limitations so that your life expands. But even if your life expands in this or that area, that expansion also, if you go then, if you flow into that expansion, you will come up suddenly against a new set of limitations that are part of that expansion. If you become wealthy, then okay, that brings expansion into your life and then it brings concern and worry about your investments, especially if they are in certain derivatives.

The long and the short and all that, whatever. Then the concern comes in, there's a limitation. Oh my God.

Or you become famous and then that restricts your anonymity. You can't move freely anymore. People look at you all the time.

I didn't want that. I wanted expansion. Well, you got expansion and that expansion gave you a new limitation.

Or you make so much money, you can satisfy any desire almost immediately, any physical sensory pleasure. You can go anywhere. Okay, I want to get away from here.

Okay, let's get on your own little jet or big jet and you go off the next day, free again, another place, another island. And then you sit there and a few more days, you see there are also certain things that are not quite right. It's a little bit too hot and the air conditioning isn't working.

Probably the mosquitoes are biting. Okay, we need to get somewhere else. Everywhere you go, eventually you find, even on the beach, after a few weeks or months, you find that paradise on the beach becomes a limitation because it's not interesting enough anymore.

You become dumb. You become a beach bum and you thought it was freedom. Every day, the eye in the sun, I made it.

And then after a few weeks, you kind of know it's a limitation again. So you cannot escape limitations in the world of form. I'm not saying you shouldn't make an effort to expand your life.

That's part of the play of form. It's beautiful. But do not believe that you can achieve realization of who you are or freedom through that sense of the rootedness in being, true peace, alive peace, not the dead peace.

You can't get there through the world of form. So where limitations can only be transcended internally, ultimately. You can play around with otherwise.

It's beautiful to play around, but internally, transcendence is possible. And some people had to encounter the most severe limitations on their lives through physical disability, complete loss, had to encounter whatever in whatever area, severe limitations on their lives, prison cell, to realize that there is a freedom within where limitations can be transcended through non-judgment of the present moment, non-reaction. Reaction is unconscious response, yes.

Reaction is against. Through bringing that openness, the yes to what is, the internal yes, not necessarily a verbal yes, but as in the inner attitude of being one with the present

moment, that opens up in you that which is beyond form and there you transcend limitations and there's freedom. And that's what being dead means.

Dead to the world. It's not a negative thing at all. You are much more alive when you're dead.

Much more alive. And you are much more powerful when you are a valley than when you are a mountain. The mountain aspect of you, by mountain we mean the form identity, of course you have that for a while anyway.

You don't have to worry about that. Yes, you're still, you have a form. Okay.

Be the valley while you are walking around as if you were a mountain. And that's peace. That's inner peace.

You walk around this world, which is not peaceful, as an energy field of peace. Not the peace that has abdicated consciousness and said, okay, I'm going to go back into semi-consciousness, desensitize myself, and go back into the vegetative realm and be peaceful in that way. There could be an escape also from the world of form.

I'm at peace now. Peace. That's the state you can also encounter just before you go to sleep in that last few moments.

Something pulls you, something very sweet that we call tiredness. Something very tiredness is something, we think we know what it is because we have a name for it and it's so common, but there's something very, what is that? And you say, I'm tired.

It means there's a pull. You're being pulled from within. That pull gets stronger and stronger.

And that pull can get so strong that you'd rather give up your life than resist it. People who get lost in the wilderness, they will lie down in the snow knowing that they're never going to wake up again, but the pull becomes so strong. Now, in conventional terms, we say they are so tired they have to go to sleep.

But what is tiredness? It becomes so sweet wanting to go there. You can tonight have a look, have a feel to stay conscious and feel the pull, how sweet it is to go into sleep.

Just as you enter sleep, feel the sweetness of sleep. And there are no problems there. Now, am I saying that's where we are going?

No, but it's one way you're going below thought to the one. Our destiny is to go beyond thought and then reach the one consciously. Reach it, realizing that you are it, but consciously.

So the sweetness of being is there when you go into sleep. It's so beautiful. After a long

day, you lie in bed and go, ah, no more problems.

You're going below thinking into that beautiful sweetness of being. And here the evolutionary impulse of the universe is to encounter that consciously, to be one with that consciously, which is the dead state. Because when you go into dreamless sleep, you're virtually dead.

You don't exist as a person anymore. Temporarily you unite with the source, and then you come out again. But it is our destiny to consciously unite with the source.

Don't ask me why. I know that it is. It's our destiny to consciously unite with the source of who we are.

And you can only do that if you go around as if you were already dead. Because dead means it's the formless. No more.

Death is just a dissolution of forms, but death ultimately is already life. So that's why we have the old saying, the ancient saying, die before you die. Die before you die.

Or we could, in some traditions, say, find death before death finds you. Because death will find you. And if you find death before death finds you, for example, in Christian terms, Jesus' teaching, you find what he called eternal life.

Now, eternal, of course, means not it goes on and on. It means timeless. If eternal meant it goes on and on, it would become very boring.

It would become a limitation. In heaven, you would be, after a while, you say, I don't want to be in heaven anymore. Maybe there's more going on in hell.

There was a song somebody played to me some years ago by a music band. I don't remember the name. But the title of the song was, heaven, the place where nothing ever happens.

So find death before death finds you. Beautiful. Eternal life, of course, the teaching of Jesus has been misunderstood.

First of all, they interpret it as being something that you're going to find it in the future, where after you die, you find eternal life. And then eternal was interpreted as everlasting. There are even some translations of the Bible where it's called everlasting.

But that's not right. Eternal means timeless. So I would substitute, then I would neither call it everlasting nor would I call it eternal anymore.

I would just call it timeless. Timeless. The timeless life that you are.

That's hiding in death. And so as we realize that, more and more humans realize that

dimension that is a new evolutionary level that humanity reaches, consciously uniting with that, that means you save the world. The world becomes saved, the world out there.

And it's an added bonus. Oh, that's good. And if it were to collapse, ultimately, there is no death.

Only the forms dissolve. That is the deepest, that's not conventional reality, of course. In conventional reality, death is everywhere.

So we've had the bad news, which is the everybody's going to be wiped out of the planet. Okay. Which ultimately is not the bad news at all.

It's a good news if you realize that how so fleeting it is that why attach yourself to form as if that were all there is. The little problems of my life obscuring the divinity of who you are, the depths of who you are. All the little stuff of your life, allowing it to completely obscure who you are, how vast you are as an expression of the whole, as an expression of the timeless life of consciousness itself, how vast you are.

And you're allowing little marital troubles and stock market concerns to obscure that. Ultimately, you're allowing the mind, because that's what it is. The stock market isn't the problem.

Your thoughts about the stock market are the problem. And the identification of millions of people with their minds have actually created the stock market, but that's another matter. So now it's not that the problem is never out there.

The problem is always your thoughts about it. Out there, you may have a situation that may require action. That's fine.

You look at it, become still for a moment, and you act. Action arises out of intelligent action, out of the stillness, that little space of no thought, a large stillness. You look, okay, and then action, if possible.

If no action is possible, you look and you act. That's what it is. That's power.

You're in touch with power. Not your power, the power. So we do not need to fear the end of the world, nor do we need to long for the end of the world out there.

Get to the end of the world in you. The end of the world is the end of reliance and identification with the mind, because the mind is the world. You don't even know whether there is a world out there, because you can only experience it through your mind.

The mind is the world. Attachment to the world really is attachment to your mind, to your thoughts. And so that is the transition from one state of consciousness to a higher state of consciousness, the relinquishment of that attachment to every thought that

arises.

Is there a world out there, or is it just our mind? Maybe it comes to the same thing. Waking up means stepping out of identification with thought.

And that means death. So simple. That's death.

When you don't believe in thoughts anymore, suddenly a spaciousness arises, an awareness arises, which from the point of view of thought is called death. Thought calls it death. Amazing.

Or this we could call the good news. This is one, sometimes the gospels in the New Testament are called the good news. And of course, basically that's what it is.

The basic message was already there, became distorted and obscured and misinterpreted. That's all very well, but it's there. All the ancient teachings point to it.

And now it comes in a new form, because the expression of it is form. That which it points to is formless. And that out of which the expression of it arises is the formless also.

So what is happening here is happening because the universe wants it to happen, life wants this to happen, this awakening. Awakening out of the dream of form, ultimately. Consciousness is awakening.

It's a huge, vast thing. I do not fully understand it, nobody can, but you can be a conscious expression of that movement. And it frees your life from problems.

Oh, that's a little bonus. Oh, and it gives you inner peace. Oh, that's another bonus.

It makes you a loving being. Oh, that's a bonus. You no longer contribute to spreading unhappiness in the world.

Oh, that's good. And you actually, you change the world by being an expression of that shift in consciousness, by allowing it to happen through you. You change the world, because you are all that.

And a few more are not doing it, but realizing it, and the world changes. Now, whether in the meantime, whether the world as we know it now has to collapse substantially first before the new change can manifest and express itself also through new forms remains to be seen. It perhaps depends on how quickly the new consciousness arises in humans.

And if forms need to collapse that were created by the old consciousness, from Soviet communism to Wall Street, just to take two extremes, but basically the same things, the political system, the economic system, social, the institutions and so on, are they going to survive? Some may survive, many probably will not. Is that something to be feared?

No. It's enormous change coming in internally and externally. They go together.

So let's dive just right now. We've been dying already. A little space of just awareness.

I'm pushing aside thought. A bit more. And then you have a space here.

No thought. And then after a while you can just bring it into daily life. Be there as space rather than as a form.

While you look at a tree, while you look at another human being, while you listen to another human being, be there as awareness, not as a person. While you sit in your car at the traffic light, be there as spacious consciousness, alert, alive, present, no past in you, no future in you, just aliveness, power. And miraculous things then happen.

Suddenly you have a creative idea. Or you encounter another human and there's a loving exchange for just a few seconds. But it all comes out of the space.

Making space internally, continuously until it becomes your natural way to live. Space. Initially you might even want to do this when you're at home.

Don't do it out in public in case they take you away. Hold the space like this. Here's the space.

Thoughts separate. Past goes, no past, no future, just this. It's a symbolic gesture and then you don't need it anymore.

And you'll be amazed how many occasions there are when you can be in that state when before you thought, no, I need to work everything out mentally. I need to judge, define, and interpret everything and everybody. What does he really want?

What's his intention? No, you just look. And there's far more intelligence there than any kind of thought movement.

And if the person is as the mind might have judged him, it simply means you're not going to engage in a business interaction with him, but you still love him. And he says, can you invest in my whatever short derivative, abacus one, two, three, four, whatever it's called. You will say, no, thanks.

It's fine. I won't. And you love him because you feel that underneath all his mind stuff, there is a beautiful being also.

There is being. There's consciousness.

[Speaker 10] (1:08:49 - 1:09:10)

My husband and I have been married 16 years and he's not at all interested in spiritual things. And I feel that my attitude about that is affecting my progress and driving a

wedge between us.

[Speaker 3] (1:09:20 - 1:10:04)

Yes, you've answered your own question. It does affect your progress and does drive a wedge. So you have a desire and an idea of that your husband should perhaps enjoy the same things as you do.

So regardless, I don't know your husband, but regardless of whether he is spiritual or not, because somebody could be so-called spiritual and have never sought in their life. He's spiritual, but has not sought.

[Speaker 11] (1:10:05 - 1:10:05)

Yeah.

[Speaker 3] (1:10:07 - 1:10:29)

We all are spiritual. That is our being. That's our beingness.

That's who we are first most. So your idea, what is your idea and your desire that your husband shall, what, communicate in the same sort of words as you?

[Speaker 10] (1:10:30 - 1:10:59)

That he would like to listen to Eckhart and read the same books and talk about it. And he has no desire to do that. He did listen to Eckhart, a clip on YouTube, The Enormous Power of Yes.

He said, yeah. But he doesn't talk about it. He's not at all interested in talking about God.

He said, if there's a God, great. If there's not, great. I have no interest.

[Speaker 3] (1:11:00 - 1:11:24)

Okay. Let me just turn it to him for just a second here. And what is it that you see in him?

What makes you see in him that he is spiritual? Without having to talk about it. What is it that you see in him that is spiritual?

What is it that he may show or do, or even something that he says or communes with that is spiritual?

[Speaker 10] (1:11:26 - 1:11:33)

Well, a couple of things. One is he's very supportive of me, no matter what I want to do is fine.

[Speaker 3] (1:11:34 - 1:16:25)

He has no criticisms. So he accepts you, accepts you as you are, but you don't accept him as he is. I struggle with that.

Yeah. Yeah. Which is one of the hindrances to your progress.

Yeah. So it's not about him. Yeah.

It's about you and your path, and you're shedding your ideas and desires and begin to then live with the essence of who he is, accepting, allowing him to be as he is. But most importantly, before you can even probably do that, you then need to accept and allow yourself to be who you are. Be the space.

Many people have asked us, asked me, I don't know why they don't dare to ask Eckhart things like this, but they ask me, you know, they go, wow, you must have a wonderful, great relationship with Eckhart. You guys must talk about spiritual things all the time. And I'm like, no, actually, we hardly ever talk about it.

What is there really to talk about being spiritual? That's talk, form. The most important thing is to be the stillness, be the space, and then see what emerges.

It's not that we don't talk about it, but we're not talking about it all the time. When it's necessary, when it comes up, it's there. When it's time to make dinner, it's there.

When it's time to talk about other things, it's there. The relationship that we have with the form of this moment includes your relationship with stillness as primary importance, the primary relationship. So then our loving partners, our husbands, the wives, it's just a secondary sort of factor.

The true marriage is the marriage within, to the God within, to stillness. That's the true union. And when you have come into union with yourself, then you see the union that is just right there in front of you, husband, wife, child, animal, stranger, their essence.

So take a look at all the desires that you have, the expectations, the ideas of what you think may be the perfect relationship, and see that the only relationship you're having is with an idea in your head, instead of the being that's right there in front of you. Thank you. So love is now.

This very moment, what is coming through? What are we expressing? What's going on within?

Whatever is going on within you now is what you are manifesting externally.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:01 - 2:43:55)

Something, perhaps the most precious thing in your life is inner peace. Because no matter what you get in this world, without that, it's not really worth that much. So in any moment or situation, if you can remember that, then you realize that the situation is secondary.

Yes, of course, you have to deal with it if it requires action. But there's always something else that's more fundamental, more vital. Because even if you achieve what you wanted, but through this, the action, you lose inner peace, it's not that helpful anymore, whatever it was that you achieved.

What is it worth? Inner peace goes away, is obscured through mental judgments, concepts that you completely believe in. So it's not something you need to find, it's already in you, that's the amazing thing.

Even in the most seemingly insane person, there is inside, there is the core of inner peace, stillness, aliveness. I can only use pointers, and as I use the pointers, hopefully you go within and see if at this moment, you can realize the reality of what the words point to, otherwise they are only words. Something in you loves that inner peace.

And then there's the ego in everybody, unless it's dissolved already, that wants something else. It's more important, it says. Or it says, you won't find inner peace until you get this or that.

And there's always a postponement. If you listen to the egoic mind, it says, yes, I want peace, but before I can get there, I need this and this and this. Unless this and this and this I get, I can't really fully go into that.

It's just not, can't do it now, not now. First, Jesus talked about that when he said, you get, people get an invitation to a wedding, it's a parable. People get an invitation to a wedding, and they all have another excuse.

One says, well, first I need to deal with some real estate that I have, and when I get that out of the way, I'll come. Somebody else says, first I need to do that, first I need to, there's always, the excuses always start with, first I need to, and one even says, first I need to bury my father. If, and even there, Jesus says, let the dead bury the dead.

Quite a radical statement. What he's saying that, if you haven't found that dimension within yourself, you are as if dead. It doesn't mean it's not there in you, potentially it's still there, but in the meantime, you are as if you were dead.

You're not dead, it's like saying, let's say, to use a deficient comparison, the, let's say you have a billion dollars in a Swiss bank account, but you don't know it, so you are poor, you are as if completely poor, because you have no idea. So you behave like a poor man, you do, and you ask for, please give me a penny, not knowing that there is a vast treasure, and of course, a billion dollars is absurd, nothing compared to that. And the

analogy is deficient, but that's okay, all analogies are.

So let me first, let me first, well first I need to think about this, so that it doesn't work. First comes that, and everything else then begins to flow with greater ease. And again, Jesus says, what you thought you needed for your happiness, once you realize that the kingdom of heaven is what you want, it's your first choice, then everything else will be added.

Whatever you thought you needed for your fulfillment and peace, will be added, you don't need it anymore. But you need to choose peace first, which implies you surrender to the present moment, and you step out of the judgments of your mind. In other words, you die, because the false self lives on non-surrender and judgment.

And denial of the present moment, it can't tolerate the present moment. That's why it says first I need to look somewhere else and do something else. So yes, I forgot to mention that you need to die, because that's what it is, but what dies is not, is false anyway.

But as long as the false is mistaken for the real, it's a little bit as if, ooh. And only really if you have, if you're fed up with the suffering that the usual state of consciousness, the egoic state has created for you, then you begin to be ready to say, okay, fed enough. I'm fed up with that suffering.

To the ego, suffering often looks like a positive thing. It's a perverted way of looking at things. Oh, I'm so anxious.

At least I feel alive. I must be alive because I'm anxious. I have enemies, so I must be important.

I have huge problems. I must be an important person with such huge problems, because without my problems, who would I be? These are implied thought movements.

They're not conscious, because the moment you make them conscious, you see their absurdity. I'd like to talk today about something people have been periodically asking me. What do you think about this book?

So I thought I'll bring it along and tell you what I think about it. But not only that, we'll see, because there's no point in talking about something. One has to go deeper into it to know it, knowledge about and true knowing the difference in that.

So people have been asking, what do you think about A Course in Miracles? Well, here it is. It's heavy.

Paper is very thin, like the Bible. And it's about as long as the Bible. Some of you know it well or have gone through it.

Or are still going through it. Some of you have heard of it. Some of you have tried to get into it but didn't like it.

Some of you have never heard of it, perhaps. So it's been around for a few years. Came out in 76.

And it is a self-study course for inner transformation. I'm telling you this just very briefly. You are supposed to study it by yourself.

Some people go to groups too. It's divided into three parts. It's a long text.

The lessons, one per day for one year, 365. And the workbook for teachers, which is relatively short at the end. It's an incredible phenomenon.

It's a book that was channeled. And just the same as with other spiritual writings, only a small percentage of channeled works are actually quite deep. Just as small as anywhere else.

Sometimes people are immediately impressed when something is channeled. In other words, some spirit or presence talks through you. And some people, the moment they say, this is channeled, they say, ah.

Of course, you always have to remember that famous saying, just because they are dead doesn't mean they are smart. So it can be at first very impressive if the person suddenly goes, this is so-and-so speaking. Good afternoon, entities.

And then you can't question anymore. So a small, very small percentage of channeled works go deep. And I believe A Course in Miracles does.

But it certainly is not for everybody. And certainly I'm not telling you, oh, you now have to do the Course. No, you may.

We'll see. But it is not for everybody. Not everybody needs it.

If presence is already transforming your life, then that's where the Course in Miracles wants to get you, basically. So it's already there for you. If presence is already transforming your life, your relationships, the way in which you experience reality, it's already doing that, increasing inner peace, increasing freedom from externals and reactivity towards other people and external conditions.

If you are already experiencing that, then you don't really need it. You may still enjoy reading it, but you don't need it. If you've been following this teaching, and of course something in you has drawn you here, that which is real has recognized the truth and says, ah, yes.

So it gets, and as you are here, something within you responds. So that's wonderful. But

if that is lost the moment you start dealing with people and situations, and if that has happened continuously in your life, it's happened to a few people, that there's presence when they are quiet, not disturbed.

It's beautiful. They can access stillness. So that's already a huge breakthrough, huge breakthrough.

You can access stillness when you're not being challenged by anything and your mind subsides for a while, because ultimately you are really only challenged by your mind. It looks like the situation, but it's your mind interpreting the situation that challenges you and takes you out into disturbance. So if you already can access that in moments when you can become still, and beautiful, that's enormous breakthrough.

But it may be that, despite that, you very quickly lose it in this moment you relate to other human beings. And you go into the usual thing, as if you had never heard of any spiritual teaching. And only you can know that, or you can ask the people who know you, if you don't know it, what do you think of me?

Old friends, family members, well, you might not get an objective opinion there. Then I would say try to apply the lessons of the Course in Miracles, because it uses relationships as spiritual practice. That's one of the main focal points of the Course in Miracles, is using the relationships with other humans.

The most difficult challenge in your life, in this lifetime, is other humans' relationship with other humans. There's no doubt that that is the greatest challenge. But it's also, there's no doubt that it is there that the new consciousness needs to come in and change the way in which you relate, so that a different energy, you put out a different energy.

You do not contribute to the madness of the world. So you put out a different energy in relationships. You dissolve conflict.

You are the bringer of peace. And you realize that's your main priority in life. In the terminology of the Course in Miracles, you become a teacher of God.

Teacher doesn't mean necessarily that you explain something. No, you live it. And by living it, you teach it.

So then that might be a helpful thing to apply the lessons every day, one, because the lessons are meant to be applied in everyday situations in relationships. I'll give you later one or two examples or three of the lessons and what they can do. Applying the teaching in everyday life.

And that is a reflection. If you want to know where you're at in your spiritual growth, which is not a good term, well, spiritual growth is probably fine. Personal shrinkage,

spiritual growth.

So if you want to know where you're at in your personal shrinkage and the corresponding spiritual growth, St. Paul, was it St. Paul? He talked about that. He says, I must diminish and Christ in me must grow.

So something the light shines, begins to shine through. So the criterion, so sometimes not easy to know where are you at in your spiritual growth and personal shrinkage is to look at all the people that you relate with and both people you know intimately and people, other people. Let's give you a reflection.

And the absence or lack of conflict, your ability to dissolve conflict as it approaches you in the form, inevitably not of cats and dogs, they are okay. Even a barking dog, that's not a big challenge. But a human, a barking human, and as that comes towards you, how your ability not to react in the terms of the cause of miracles, one would say to forgive, to look through the error in the other, to look through the ego and it's there everywhere, to look and forgive.

Not to equate somebody's egoic behavior with who they are, that's forgiveness. In the terms of causing miracles, you say if it's not love that comes to you from another human, it's a call for healing and help. So it reinterprets how you would usually interpret when somebody is offensive or whatever.

You reinterpret that, to change it, it causes miracles to change your perceptions. You reinterpret it and you realize that this mind, let's say obnoxious person, it really is a call for healing and help because that person is out of touch with the reality of who he or she is. Doesn't know the oneness of all life.

So that's a helpful thing and then there are many other lessons to apply to situations with other humans in daily life, especially your ability to heal situations. One stumbling block for many and for some the stumbling block will be so huge that they cannot do a course in miracles, even those who might need it, but there are many, many other ways you can apply presence. The terminology it uses is limited, but that's form.

Anything in form has its limitations. So the course in miracles has certain limitations and they regard the terminology, which is old fashioned Christian terminology. That's one.

Some for some people that's fine. They actually love because the terms that had become perhaps to some extent lifeless or meaningless to them, suddenly they see that there is a deeper meaning to all those terms like Holy Spirit or atonement, which should be pronounced at-one-ment and so on. So for some people, that's a nice thing.

They can see that what they perhaps were brought up as when they were a child, there's a deeper dimension to those terms. For others, they say, I can't stand it. I can't stand that fact that God is a he and God is the father.

What about the mother? That's the limitation of the course in miracles. It's the terminology.

If you can look beyond it and see what it points to is there's nothing to do with male or female. But the terminology has that limitation. If you can look beyond it, fine.

It's no longer a barrier. If you continuously feel an inner every time that says father, God, or he, female pronoun is never used once in the whole course. There's no she.

But that doesn't mean that it excludes women. It just includes. So it's only you can find out for yourself whether that is a barrier for you.

And if it's too much of a barrier, if you cannot look beyond it, forget it. It's fine. Even course in miracles wouldn't say that you have to study a course in miracles.

It says, no, this is just one of many forms that the universal curriculum takes. The universal curriculum is where we are all going. But there are many forms of the universal curriculum.

And there is not one form of the universal curriculum that is the right one. There are many, many. And you will be drawn to whatever universal curriculum corresponds to your inner state and what most draws you.

And that's something you do with form. Of course, you want to go through form to reach the formless in yourself. But there are certain forms to which the form that you are drawn more than to others.

And those can more easily take you beyond form. If you try to force yourself into a form of teaching that does not resonate with your inner, then that becomes a great hindrance. Perhaps you were born into a certain form of the universal curriculum which may not correspond to what would be most helpful for you.

And then it would be good to find another. So the universal curriculum, every teaching is a form of that universal curriculum. But the essence of the universal curriculum is to reach the formless within yourself, which is where you and God merge, where you and the source of all life merge, where the little me realizes its true reality, where the little ripple realizes that it is the ocean, but continues to be a ripple for a little while.

But if the ripple, and this is a example taken from the course in the text, if the ripple and the ocean thinks of itself as separate, imagine that, the ripple on the ocean, the world becomes very threatening because the vastness, I'm just, who am I on this little short-lived thing on this vastness and all the other ripples are my enemies, what do they want? And the waves. And if the ripple could realize by going within, I am the ocean.

Temporarily appearing as a ripple. Oh, that's great. Of course, I'm not going to last that

long as a ripple, but I'm eternal as the ocean.

What a liberation. Another analogy apart from the ripple, gives the analogy of the ray of sunlight. And if the little ray forgets that it is actually part of the sun, because the light that comes to you from the sun is actually, it's an extension of the sun.

But if the ray forgets that it is an extension of the sun and says, it's little me, doesn't know where it comes from, it doesn't know its source, it just looks around at other rays and says, who are you? I don't like the way you look. But if the ray could find its source, then you can enjoy all the other rays because they're all the same source.

And then you can look at another ray through the source. So you go in and then instead of looking at the other from out here, you look at the other from the point of view of the source and you realize the oneness. So you go, you don't look like that, that's two, me and you.

You go there, where we are both come from the same source and you look from there and say, oh, we look like two, but we're actually one. That's the, that's the realization of oneness, the greatest liberation there is. And really that's, again, what any, any spiritual teaching is designed to do for you is to take you to that realization of oneness, which has nothing to do with thinking.

Thinking creates duality. You have to go beyond thinking to realize oneness. Cause and Miracles is a teaching of oneness as are all, but it does that in a very strange way.

Because it, the most people who study it, they come from a belief in duality. And so the Cause and Miracles uses the language of duality to gradually take you to oneness. It doesn't immediately use the language of oneness.

So it talks about God the Father is with you. Of course, ultimately God the Father and you are one. And God the Father is also God the Mother.

So, but it takes you by the hand to take you where you are and then gradually take you into the realization of oneness, which is where the words don't, are not important anymore. And when you get to the third part of the workbook with the lessons, it says, words are beginning to be less and less important from now on. And the lessons get shorter and shorter.

And it says, the words are only the beginning. What comes after the words, the state you enter after the words is what matters. So it takes you gradually into oneness.

But it can be at first confusing because the language is the language of duality, which you still hear in most churches. There are, there is another, there are some other Christian teachings that express duality more directly, like Joel Goldsmith, for example. He is a Christian version of what in India is called Advaita, non-duality, which is the

deepest truth of Hinduism beyond all mythology.

Advaita means oneness or non, not two, non-duality. Joel Goldsmith is a Christian version of that. And ultimately, Causing Miracles is also a Christian version of that.

But Causing Miracles does not express oneness as directly. It just takes you there. Now, you might think this was channeled, that probably was channeled to some monk in a remote mountain monastery in the cell or nun.

And the strangest thing about it is that it was written in New York City. And it was not written by a priest or nun or monk. It was written by a woman who was a medical, a professor of medical psychology at Columbia University.

And she said of herself, perhaps the most unlikely person spirit could have chosen. In her opinion, she was. She didn't understand the cause very well.

And certainly, as she herself said, she couldn't live it. She was just the medium through which it came. And at one point, she asked the voice that she heard.

It started one day, shortly after her colleague at the university, they were constantly fighting. He, she and her colleague and all the other people, it is quite normal in most institutions, constantly bickering and fighting and complaining about each other and intrigues and fighting for position and so on. And her colleague, another professor of medical psychology said to her one day, there must be another way.

And a little bit later, something started inside her and she realized perhaps this is the answer. First, she had visions, strange visions. In one, she saw herself, it was a kind of dream.

She saw an ancient chest and she went in a cave and she opened this ancient chest and out of it, she took an old parchment and she started to unroll because the parchment has rolls left and right. She started to unroll it to see what, and she saw writing on the left, but she couldn't quite decipher it and writing on the right more and more. And the central panel was blank and then she heard the voice that later started to dictate the cause to her.

And the voice said, if you read what's on the left, you will know the past. If you read what is on the right, you will know the future. And then she looked again at the central panel and there just had two words that said, God is.

And then she rolled it back to where just the central panel was visible. And she said, I'm not interested in the past or future. This is all I want.

This is what I want. God is. And the voice said, congratulations, you've made it this time.

This is all I want. Just this. That was what the choice was, present moment, I don't want

to know past and future.

And she had a few more visions and then one day she heard a voice coming inside her which said, this is a course in miracles. Please take notes. And it started with a summary of the whole course and she was writing and said, I'm going insane.

I'm going insane. She was an atheist. I'm going mad.

But she had to, compulsion was strong, she had to write. And then it came the summary before the whole course started, the summary of the whole course, which by the way, if you understand it, that's it, you can go home. Nothing real can be threatened.

Nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of God. Of course she didn't understand it, but we do. Do we?

Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

A few more things came through and the next morning she went to her office at Columbia University and talked to her colleague Bill and said, I'm going mad. I'm going insane. This is what's happened to me.

And he said, okay, calm down. Let's see what you've written and then we'll decide if you're mad or not. And she showed it to him and said, this doesn't look mad.

I would do a bit more and that's how it started. And then every morning she would bring it into her office. Almost every day the dictation came.

She would go into her office, lock the door. He would come in, they would lock the door because of course they couldn't tell anybody else. And they went through it and it took seven years.

And sometimes when she got interrupted in the middle of a sentence and a day or two or three days later she picked up the pen again, the voice would just complete the sentence immediately. So it's just quite a phenomenon. I love it.

I actually realized yesterday when I picked it up because it came to me that I had read somebody else had asked what do you think about it? So it came to me that I wanted to talk about it today. I hadn't actually opened it for several years.

And it was lovely to open it again. And many, many years ago for when I lived in England still for a while I used the course shortly after I discovered it I used it as a medium through which to teach. And so I would have little groups and workshops and sometimes spent a whole day on just one lesson.

Read a lesson and talk about it. And some people, even people who didn't like the Course in Miracles, they came and said, now we understand it. So it did help to have

some to express it in somewhat different words.

I'd like to give you just a taste of and as we do that see if we can get to the very essence of it as we are here because what's the point otherwise? Can we get to the very essence of the Course in Miracles here not in 365 days from now but here? Okay, let's see.

Let's start with lesson one and if we can do lesson one completely you will have done the entire course. Any lesson, if you can do it completely it doesn't say that here but I'm telling you if you can do it completely which means live it that's the entire Course in Miracles. You don't need to pick it up again.

And lesson one is a little weird. Well, some of the others are too. By the way, there is the writing is various in power and intensity to some extent but there are many very powerful and beautiful passages of great spiritual power and beauty in the text.

Some extraordinary passages. Lesson one. Every lesson has a title.

The title of this lesson is always just one sentence. Nothing I see in this room means anything. And then what you're supposed to do is look slowly around you, practice applying this idea very specifically to whatever you see.

This table doesn't mean anything. This glass doesn't mean anything. This chair, this carpet doesn't mean anything.

This hand doesn't mean anything. This foot doesn't mean anything. This flower doesn't mean anything.

Then look further away. It says apply to a wider range. That door doesn't mean anything.

That light doesn't mean anything. Apply to a wider range. Apply to anything you see.

Says before, don't try to understand what this is all about. Well, I'll tell you what this is all about but I'm sure you know it. Do it no more than, this is the beginning, no more than twice a day, preferably morning and evening.

Not more than a minute or so. This is for beginners. Not more than a minute or so.

A comfortable sense of leisure is essential as you do it. Use it indiscriminately. Don't exclude anything specific.

So what is the purpose in that? The purpose, this doesn't mean anything. The purpose is to wipe the blackboard clean on which the blackboard that's full of scribbles, interpretations, projections, opinions, judgments, thoughts, imagine a blackboard full of scribbles.

So you take this lesson and some of the subsequent lessons, you take a sponge or

whatever you do and you begin to wipe. It's a voluntary relinquishing of all mental judgments and concepts. All the meaning, lesson two, gives you a little bit further.

It says, I've given everything I see in this room all the meaning that it has for me. Wiping the blackboard clean. It's also an act of humility because the ego says, I know.

And you're beginning to admit that you don't know and so that something deeper in you can come forth that had been obscured by the one who thought he or she knew. Lesson three says, I do not understand anything I see in this room or wherever you are. So you're letting go of interpretations.

In the next lesson, you do it with your own thoughts. These thoughts do not mean anything. They are like the things I see in this room.

So you're letting go of investment in identification with thoughts. So beautiful early lessons and really, if you can do lesson one completely, so what did I mean by that? Let's try and do it completely.

Nothing I see in this room means anything. Now, if you do that completely, what happens inside you? Your mind has nothing else, nothing more to do.

You stop thinking. Doesn't mean anything, so that's it. There's nothing else to think about.

So if you could do it completely, it would lead to the cessation of thinking and what remains of you if the thinker subsides or dies? What remains of you if the movement of thought subsides? The essence of who you are, the formless.

You could say the Christ or the Buddha nature, whatever terms people have used to describe it, that's what remains. The unconditioned consciousness, the timeless, the eternal, no past, no future. So that if you do this lesson and live it, you're no longer imposing interpretations and everything, there's a clarity of perception as you look at things and humans and a refusal to think, an act of surrender and you become innocent like a little child.

But there's an enormous energy there. In the terms, of course, in miracles, it would mean the power of God in you. Also, of course, you're totally present.

The moment that happens, you're totally present. The Course in Miracles calls it, it is the practice of the power of God in you. This is the practice of the power of God in you.

The present moment, the Course in Miracles calls the holy instant. It has some wonderful passages about the power of the holy instant or the present moment. They are like, they are meditations.

I'll read some very short passages and let's treat it as a deep meditation. Oh, by the way,

did you know that the ego wants you dead, but not itself? Oh, did you know that when the Course in Miracles uses the word brother, it includes sister, which really, brother means every other human.

Okay, so we have to look beyond that limitation. Let's do that. So it says, if you believe there is a space between you and your brother, you are insane.

Wow. I'm not going to say anything about that. I'll let you not work it out, but feel the truth of it, because mentally you'll go insane if you start trying to work that out.

Feel the truth of it. Fear is not of the present, but only of the past and future, which do not exist. There is no fear in the present when each instant stands clear and separated from the past without its shadow reaching out into the future.

Each instant is a clean, untarnished birth in which the Son of God, that's you, emerges from the past into the present. This lesson takes no time, for what is time without a past and future? It has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are.

Begin to practice, sorry, take this very instant now and think of it as all there is of time. Take this very instant now and think of it as all there is of time. There's nothing, there's only this instant, nothing else, which is the truth.

There's only this instant. Nothing can reach you here out of the past, and it is here that you're completely absolved, completely free and holy without condemnation. From this holy instant where in holiness was born again, you will go forth in time without fear and with no sense of change, no sense of change with time.

You go back, you go into time, but there is a continuous realization of the timeless within yourself, the dimension of formless consciousness itself. In this redeeming instant lies heaven. Start now to practice your little part in separating out the holy instant.

You will receive very specific instructions as you go along. Now, the next sentence is important. I quote it occasionally.

To learn to separate out this single second and to experience it as timeless is to begin to experience yourself as not separate. To learn to separate out this single instant and experience it as timeless is to begin to experience yourself as not separate. So through that intense presence, the delusion of separation also subsides.

And you can then from there look at a different way another human and sense the oneness beyond bodies. And that comes out of the presence. And that's the sword of, as I call it sometimes, the sword of presence cutting through time.

It is only your weakness that will depart from you in this practice, for it is the practice of

the power of God in you. All you lose in this practice is your weakness. It is the practice of the power of God in you.

Use it but for one instant and you will never deny it again. God knows you now. He remembers nothing, having always known you exactly as he knows you now.

This still uses the language of duality, but it gradually takes you into the realization that you and God are one. The holy instant refers to the moment and reflects his knowing by bringing all perception out of the past, thus removing the frame of reference you have built by which to judge your brothers. Once this is gone, the Holy Spirit substitutes his frame of reference for it.

The veil that has been drawn across reality is lifted. Nothing has changed, yet the awareness of changelessness comes swiftly as the veil of time is pushed aside. The veil of time is pushed aside.

This is the primordial spiritual practice, no matter where you go, at the core of any spiritual system is this. Whether you go to Buddhist meditation or wherever, this is the primordial spiritual practice. And to hold that, to hold that intense awareness of now, or awareness of awareness, consciousness of being conscious of consciousness, whatever you want to call it, it transforms everything.

So beautiful meditations in here. You can see how it all comes together. I'm focusing here on this particular aspect, the power of which really is the center of the whole course.

Now, just to give you a taste of two lessons, they kind of go together, 33 and 34. You can use it as a little sample if you want to use it for the rest of the day, today, just as a little sample. The title of the lesson is, there's another way of looking at the world.

Today's idea is an attempt to recognize that you can shift your perception of the world in both its outer and inner aspects. Full five minutes should be devoted in the morning and evening applications. The shorter exercise periods should be as frequent as possible.

Specific applications of today's idea should also be made immediately when any situation arises which tempts you to become disturbed. For these applications say, there is another way of looking at this. Any situation where there's even the slightest disturbance or irritation, you use that there is another way of looking at this.

That's all, just that. Remember to apply today's idea the instant you're aware of distress. It may be necessary to take a minute or so to sit quietly and repeat the idea to yourself several times.

Closing your eyes will probably help in this form of application. There is another way of looking at the world. The next lesson on the next day is, I could see peace instead of

this.

I could see peace instead of this. Search your mind for fear thoughts, anxiety provoking situations, offending personalities or events or anything else about which you're harboring unloving thoughts. Note them all casually repeating the idea for today slowly as you watch them arise in your mind and let each one go to be replaced by the next.

The shorter applications are to be frequent and made whenever you feel your peace of mind is threatened in any way. If a specific form of temptation arises in your awareness, the exercise should take this form. I could see peace in this situation instead of what I now see in it.

If there's depression, anxiety or worry, use the idea in its original form. I could see peace instead of this. It's a reinterpretation of how you would habitually interpret events and the world.

I could see peace instead of this. So hopefully you'll get one or two disturbances today because otherwise there's nothing to practice with. Now it is possible, of course, that you're already at peace to such an extent that the disturbance does not arise anymore.

Well, that's even better. Then there's no need to practice. The world will always challenge you in the form of people, situations, and ultimately always comes down to your mind.

You're ultimately only challenged by your mind, disturbed by your mind. You're not disturbed by the situation. You're not disturbed by the situation.

You're disturbed by your mind. Really? Yes.

So that's an amazing realization, isn't it? It's so easy to forget because the conditioning is so deep-seated and there's nothing personal in that. It's not your fault if you forget.

If you say that's my fault, that's more illusion. The conditioning is so deep-seated of not realizing that ultimately it is your mind that creates your unhappiness, of anxiety, of fear. So it's not what your mind says it is.

It's your mind. So your mind says, look at there, look at that situation. And you say, no, I'm going to look at you.

No, no, don't look at me. Look at, he did it. Look, I didn't do anything like a little child.

That's what children do, isn't it? No, I didn't. He, my brother did it.

So there's the power of awareness in you and that we are here as we sit here, it grows. Your power of awareness, you just need to be here. It grows as you sit here, even though occasionally your mind will come in and say, I'd rather be somewhere else.

And then it subsides again. The presence grows as you sit here because that's the essence of our gathering, it's presence. In the meantime, a few words and concepts, some of which are helpful and some of which keep your mind from doing harm while you sit here.

But it is an energetic process as we sit here beyond what you listen to with your ears, that's secondary. There's an energetic process at work. It has nothing to do with concepts.

Towards the end of the course, it says, the use of words is almost over now. And that's after 365 days. There's almost a little paradox there because on the one hand, one could say, well, the course gives you time to reach the timeless in yourself.

And that is true, it is a paradox, but it is addressed in the text also. It gives you time on this level here to reach the timeless, but at any moment that realization can be there. So it doesn't say you're not going to get there until you reach the end of the course.

You can get there at the very beginning already, or rather realize that you're already there. It's a very radical thing. The Course in Miracles takes you to the edge, and after that, you jump off.

Now, we have been jumping off already. Takes you to the edge of the mind, trying to understand mentally, letting go of that also. Going into this beautiful state of not knowing, no longer needing to impose judgments on the world.

Going to the state of not knowing. That's where any spiritual teaching comes out of that, not accumulated knowledge. It comes out of that openness.

Any creative act comes out of not knowing. So you need to become comfortable with that state, which is also the state, of course, of not thinking or not looking to thought for some ultimate answer or fulfillment or identity. Really, what I teach is, and what you get to, what the Course aims to take you, is what is the core of all spiritual practice, is the end of compulsive thinking.

Thinking, you can still use it, use thinking if you need it, but it doesn't use you anymore. You are no longer the thinker. Your identity is no longer based in your thought activity.

That's the ego is gone then. I am not the thinker. Yes, thinking happens, but I am not the thinker.

I am the vastness out of which thinking happens and into which it subsides. So go to any other teaching who, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his span of life, I suppose, in one translation. Do not take thought for the moral, for the moral shall take thought for the things of itself.

That's the old translation in Jesus. Do not take thought for the moral. The moral shall take thought for the things of itself.

Only the present moment exists. If the person who was taking notes when Jesus was talking forgot to write down, only the present moment exists. Go to any teacher, Advaita in India.

Some of you are familiar with it. Some have never heard the word. The teaching of non-duality, the teachers of non-duality.

How can you reach the realization of non-duality? By not thinking. That's non-duality.

The moment you start thinking again, you're back in duality. So to realize non-duality, the oneness of all life and your oneness with all life and your oneness with life itself, because all life is all life forms, but life itself is the unmanifested one eternal life, God. To realize your oneness with that, there must be a cessation of birth, continuous birth of forms.

And then there is just the ground out of which the forms come. That's it. That is the realization of oneness.

And only then when you sense that in the depths of who you are, you can look upon the world with love. Until you can sense that, love is an illusion. You may try very hard to be loving.

Okay, I must be loving. I must be really patient with him. But of course you can't hold that for too long.

I've been loving now for two hours and you're still behaving like that. I just can't love anymore. So it's only when you sense that and you can look upon the world of form and realize they're all just temporary expressions of that one that I am.

That's a verbalization, but the knowing is beyond words. And that's peace. That's where you become the true teacher of God to use the terminology of the Course in Miracles, because only then can you teach peace.

And only then can that power flow through you into this world that the Course in Miracles describes as a kind of delusion. A kind of nightmarish dream. A little bit like the matrix.

And deep down, people know that there's something not quite right with what we perceive as the world and the dreadful things. There's been people, when they see this film, The Matrix, there's been some, of course it's not the real truth, there's not computers that are doing it, but machines that are doing it, but there's some underlying truth that we're all walking around in some dreamlike state. This is not it.

That dreamlike state. We need to wake up. And so people get drawn, they got drawn to

that movie because there's some core truth there which says you're a dreamwalker and you need to wake up.

And it's wonderful when they saw the city scenes in the film and all these people walking around and then the protagonist is being told that they're all dreaming. Which is not quite true in the sense that it's shown in the film, but in a deeper sense, it is true. So the oneness, the realization of oneness comes with that Advaita, non-duality, which came out of, which is the deepest truth of Hinduism, where Hinduism transcends all the huge mythology that they have, which is interesting as long as you can't realize oneness keeps you busy and you get a few distant pointers to oneness through stories and images.

Nice, very nice. Yeah, but it's not quite, there's a more direct thing there. Advaita is Vedanta, the end of the Vedas.

It means that's going beyond that. It's also beyond concepts. Now, Advaita in Hinduism has become fashionable in the West lately.

Teachers are springing up every day of Advaita, like mushrooms. Now, some are great, but many can't stop thinking. And they're teaching Advaita from the point of view of the thinking mind.

And how to tell the difference, very easy. Go and listen to an Advaita teacher. And if you feel a little bit sick when you leave, then that's not it.

Sick in the stomach. Oh, I feel much worse now than before. They tell you things like, it's all an illusion.

Your problems, what's your problems? Ah, it's an illusion. And then they go back to their wife and say, where the hell is my dinner?

And if you challenge them on that, they say, oh, I don't know. They say, nothing to do with me. That's an illusion too.

Krishnamurti, the whole teaching of Krishnamurti, another beautiful expression of the universal curriculum, one particular form of the universal curriculum. What's he talking about? Can thinking get us to this realization?

Can thinking get us, let's investigate. Can it get us there? And an hour later, no, it can't.

Oh, okay. He practiced non-thinking frequently. Didn't practice, it came kind of naturally.

That's where the teaching came from. So if some of you, we're all in the terms of causing miracles. You are the teacher of God because you are practicing that.

If you become a spiritual teacher in a more formal way, not the Advaita one, well, unless

you have that realization, not the mind, the mental teacher, but the true teacher, you may feel that you're never quite ready to teach. If you feel you're now ready to teach, that's probably not it. That's probably the ego.

But if you feel you're not ready to teach and yet something, the situation calls upon you to teach in one way or another, formal or semi-formal or informal, it could be simply somebody asking a question or there's a group of people, little group, whatever it may be. Or somebody says, oh, come and talk to us. Me?

Yes. I have nothing to say. Well, that's good.

Then come and become comfortable with not having anything to say because we don't have anything to say either, but feel uncomfortable with it. But if somebody can become comfortable with not knowing and sit in front of a group and not thinking that I should be speaking now or I should know, but just become comfortable with the state of not knowing, you may find that after a minute or two, you say something. Word suddenly comes.

It might be something very simple. Here we are in the present moment. What does it feel like to be in the present moment?

Let's find out what it feels like. I feel a slight disturbance because I'm sitting here talking to you. I don't, but it's just the same.

I'm constantly becoming present and then words come. The one who is teaching is always the one who is most empty. That's where the power comes through.

And of course, in the West, we are only gradually learning that there are spiritual teachers. Some spiritual teachers traditionally don't speak. They have a different way of teaching.

They teach by being present or still. And just looking at you. That's beautiful too.

Here we have a mixture of words and looking. And who is looking? When I look at you, who is looking, the person or something deeper?

If I'm not thinking when I look at you, then the person isn't looking. Consciousness is coming through. And what is it that you recognize?

Yourself. Something within your response. And you say, oh, it feels so good.

And consciousness recognizes itself. So you're becoming who you are. Yourself beyond the story and your history.

What a dreadful story. Mine is too. It becomes unimportant as far as your identity is concerned.

This is your identity. It has no form and you can't call it anything. You can't even call it man or woman.

Certainly has no age. Has no form. You can't say what it is.

You can't examine it. It's the I. It is I.

I without a past. I without a future. Isn't that amazing?

But that is what emerges as you let go of obsession with thinking. And then gradually you learn to not lose that or have it obscured even when you start to think again so that thinking is interspersed with spaces. And so that you even feel the space while you think and speak.

If you can feel the space that you are, the consciousness in the background while you speak, then your words have power and are fresh and new and creative. And then your relationships are loving and peace flows out from you. The challenge is not to be drawn so much into thinking that you're going totally out again.

So to hold that, to hold the awareness of awareness, so to speak, and then speak. Be aware of the danger of the, how the mind has enormous momentum. Especially if somebody asks you, what do you think of the Republicans or the Democrats or whatever it is?

And before you know it, you lost space completely. Well, I'll tell you what I think. Or whatever it is.

Your ex-husband, wife, opinions. What's your opinion? The Buddha talked about the thicket of opinions.

Don't get involved in that, he said. Drop your opinions, relinquish your opinions. Oh really, no, what the Zen master said beautifully, he didn't even say drop, you don't need to drop your opinions.

Stop cherishing your opinions. Just that. But of course, what are opinions?

Thoughts. A bundle of thoughts are your opinions. So when the Zen master says, stop cherishing your opinions, he's saying, stop cherishing your thoughts.

Stop cherishing your thinking. You can still have it, of course you still have it. But you don't cherish it, which means really, you don't attach a value to it that it doesn't have.

You don't look to it for your identity. You're not totally drawn into it, it exists there. But here you are, a much vaster presence, and here's your little opinion.

Rather than the opinion pretending to be you. And getting. So you can then play with

opinions.

Okay, I think that's how it is, but you might think differently. And then you don't have to be disagreeable when you disagree. Because you only become disagreeable when you disagree if you're identified with your opinion, your thought.

If you're not identified, you don't become disagreeable. Why do you become disagreeable? Because you feel threatened in your sense of self.

Why do you feel threatened in your sense of self? Because you're identified with your thoughts. There's a self in your think, delusion of self in every thought.

Freedom from that. What freedom? Nothing real can be threatened.

Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

[Speaker 4] (2:46:06 - 2:49:01)

Welcome, everybody. Welcome, everyone here with us in Maui, as well as people who are tuning in live to this broadcast. It's a special, historic moment.

The first time that Ram Dass and Eckhart Tolle have ever been on stage together. This is a whole lot of now. Be here now and the power of now.

Two books that each perhaps more than any other two books published, influenced hundreds of thousands and continue to influence hundreds of thousands of people and introduce them, tear a veil away to the present moment. And when we have now and now together, there's a type of multiplication, I think, our experience together here. I'd ask everybody to listen with the ear of your heart.

Sometimes Eckhart asks people to listen to the space between the words. That that's where the real impact often can be found, not just in the conceptual messaging, but in the space. And listening with the ear of our heart is a similar type of listening.

As many of you know, I'm sure most of you know, Ram Dass, as he puts it, was stroked by God in 1998. And so his speech can be quite slow on occasion. And I think if we listen with the ear of our heart, we'll be tuning in to what's most essential.

So to begin with, talking about the heart, I really want to start right off right here at the beginning to ask Eckhart and Ram Dass to speak some about love as another word for now. Is it another word for now? Is it the feeling dimension of the now?

I mean, Eckhart, you so often speak of stillness. It has a different flavor than love, at least in my experience. So love as the feeling dimension of the now.

[Speaker 1] (2:49:32 - 2:59:56)

I use the word sparingly. There are certain misconceptions around love because there are so many different types of love. It's sometimes hard to get away from the idea that love is some kind of wanting.

I love this. And in the Spanish language, the usual expression for I love you means I want you. And that's very true in romantic love.

You want the other person. And as I don't remember who said it, in true love, you want the other person's good. In romantic love, you want the other person.

And so other languages have different words for love to distinguish between the emotional wanting and something deeper, agape, meta, and so on. And the Dalai Lama says, my religion is kindness. He uses that word, kindness.

So these words point to something, point to something within you, an essence from where you perceive and interact with the outside world in a very different way from the usual mental, mentalized, conceptualized perception of reality around you, including other human beings. The usual way to relate for people who have not awakened to that deeper level that I often call essence or your essence identity, the usual way is to relate to other human beings through mental concepts or judgments. They become the veil that comes in between you and your perception of reality.

And awakening is to become free of the compulsive, the compulsion to judge continuously, to interpret continuously, to label and name continuously what's around you and whoever you are with. And when that compulsion to label everything mentally, the conceptualized reality, when that subsides, and that subsides when presence arises, then you sense something in whatever you perceive that is a kind of recognition, whether it's a human being or whether it's any other being, natural, a tree or an animal, you recognize something in the other that before when you were naming and labeling, you couldn't. When you are naming and labeling, the other was always the other. And nature also was conceptualized, especially human beings become conceptualized in that the other.

In the egoic state, the ego actually emphasizes the otherness of others. By continuously criticizing, judging, have opinions and mistaking every viewpoint for the truth. Every thought that comes in, that's how he is, that's how she is.

And so there can be no love there, although that egoic entity sometimes talks about love or it says, you need to love your neighbor as yourself, it says. I'm trying very hard. And that phrase, of course, comes from Jesus who said, love your neighbor as yourself, which really means recognize your neighbor, the other as yourself.

And that recognition, that sensing when you look at another human being in the spaciousness of just this, that's the, sometimes call it the formless dimension. What

you're looking at is form. What you're looking at is the physical body and also what you are perceiving is the mental form, the psychological form of that person.

If you go beyond form, what you perceive in the other, you sense through your own presence, the presence of the other, that which cannot be seen. It's the essence of everything. If you have a, we have a little dog that's at the moment we think, oh, hope he'll survive, she'll survive, she has a heart disease.

When this dog dies, hopefully not for a while, all you're left with is the fur and the, what's behind the fur, the bones and the intestines and so on. The essence is no longer there. The essence of that being is no longer there.

But when you look at the live dog, you can sense an essence of beingness, the beingness in the other. Sometimes it's easier with animals than with humans because what you have with humans is a lot of mental identifications. So you sense the beingness because you sense your own beingness.

And that's the heart sometimes. I don't use that very often, but you could call that perceiving from the heart. You use the word more often.

Perceiving from the heart is to perceive from the beingness. And then you sense the beingness of the other. And that recognition is the recognition of oneness.

And that's love. Love is sensing that you share the consciousness. Because what you love in the other ultimately is the consciousness.

You don't love, it's nice to touch the fur of the dog or to touch another human being, to touch the skin. But ultimately, what you love in the other is something that you cannot perceive, that is beyond the senses. You cannot mentalize.

So to perceive through that space of love is to be free of the compulsion to mentalize and conceptualize. And that in practical terms, it looks like this. I'm looking at Ram Dass without conceptualization.

If I conceptualize, I have some image. I say, oh, here's the famous guru. He wrote that book.

Or I have to, whatever concepts I have, can I look at him without any concepts? And there's just, there's suddenly a meeting in stillness. Because that's really what it is.

When you look at something without naming it, you look through the stillness. And I'm inviting, I know he's already in stillness, and I'm inviting everybody here at this very moment to perceive and look the totality of this room, the environment, whatever is around us, not through any naming, but through simple, the alert space of stillness. Be the space of stillness, just this.

And then you perceive lovingly. Then there is no other anymore. The other only appears the moment you conceptualize.

And so that's how stillness and love are related, very closely. And the now, of course, is all part of it. It's all, the stillness is the essence of now.

And so love arises. That's the, that's our destiny is to live in that way as a normal, our normal state of consciousness. And then, of course, the world will become transformed if enough humans live in that space to, we'll come back to that.

Because basically, we're always talking about the one, we're always pointing to the one essential truth, which is the truth of who you are.

[Speaker 2] (3:00:00 - 3:05:55)

I would like to speak that love is not part of the emotions, rather that love is, is soul talk, soul talk. Because I, the, I, let's see here. We are each souls, and then we are one.

These are two different levels of, of consciousness. When the individual soul meets another individual soul, there is a recognition that, that is, it is a soul. And the ego is rooted in, in negative, negative stuff.

And the soul is rooted in love. So that when you were in your ego, you were anxious, and you're, you're separate from everybody else. When the soul, the soul is separate from another soul, but, but they have, they have a recognition of the shared, shared consciousness.

When you have your, when you are perceiving from your soul, you will, other people look like souls. Like, for example, if you go into a store, there are different people playing different roles. There's the customer and the, the clerk.

But I go into that store, and I see these are souls, and they have, they, they're playing, they're playing these roles only on this, on this incarnation. And they've only chosen to, these roles because of their unique karma. Is that a word that's, yeah, I guess so.

[Speaker 4] (3:06:11 - 3:06:42)

Question about this, which is, not only do you use the word love sparingly in your teachings, but you don't use the word soul very much either. I often hear you talk about how our conceptual thinking keeps us separate from this field of oneness and being. But the idea of an individual soul, I'm curious if you could comment how that fits for you.

[Speaker 1] (3:06:43 - 3:14:39)

I never decided not to use the word soul, it just didn't come up. I never decided not to use the word soul, it just didn't come up. In the same way, I don't use God very often.

Soul to me means, as Ram Dass just said, you walk into a store, or anywhere, any place, you see all these different human beings, different forms. And it's, it's lovely to see the multiplicity of life forms around you, without needing to believe that the essential reality of every human being you see, or come into contact with, is the form that you see, or the role that they play. That's only a temporary thing, but you can still enjoy the multiplicity of life forms, and even enjoy, you see the roles that people play, but you can only enjoy it really, if there is a recognition of something deeper in the other.

And if you have that recognition of something deeper in the other, and you can only do it through recognizing who you are beyond your role, and beyond your form, which is consciousness, the light of consciousness, the formless, consciousness has taken on a temporary form. And so the universe produces billions, trillions, infinite life forms, even on this planet alone, even in the human form alone. Every human being, different in some way, it's amazing.

But if you only see the differences, then you're trapped on that level. You need to be able to sense your essential reality of consciousness to be able to enjoy the play of forms. Because otherwise, the play of forms not only keeps you trapped, you pursue some kind of, you're seeking some kind of thing through forms, fulfillment through other forms, other humans, that's the ego again, other humans wanting to fulfill you.

And now for my next song. That's the role that comes with this. So as we sit here, these are just temporary forms.

This form will be gone soon. This form will be gone soon. And sooner or later, all these forms will have dissolved like soap bubbles.

And all that remains is the one that expressed itself through the many. And if you know yourself as the one, which happens when the mind, the stream of thinking stops. And there's just an aware presence, a spacious, aware, formless presence.

That's who you are beyond the form. And from there, you can enjoy the play of forms. If you're not there, the play of forms is threatening.

Or you seek continuously to fulfill yourself through grasping at forms. The play of forms is never satisfying unless you have touched within yourself the root of all satisfaction, which is beingness itself, consciousness itself. The Buddha already taught us that the unsatisfactory nature of things, it's all, he says, wherever you go, you will find dukkha, suffering.

No matter what situation you go into, there's always a crack in everything. And of course, in the words of, was it Leonard Cohen? There is a crack, a crack in everything.

That's how the light gets in. So our meeting here, the things going wrong are actually beautiful because that's how this, for example, not being able to talk for a while, an

opportunity for stillness. So it's welcoming whatever arises and then being touched with that which doesn't change.

Consciousness itself, to feel, to sense at this very moment, to sense that still, alert presence in you. So is that an individual presence or is it an impersonal presence? I think you can't really distinguish between that.

The sense of I that is the formless consciousness is at the basis of everybody's sense of identity except that it gets mixed up with stories in the mind. But if you really go very deep, where does this sense of I really come from? Not the I my story or the I want and I need and I must have and so on, but the deeper sense of I-ness, the I am.

I am the way, said Jesus. I think they left out one word. I am is the way.

So just sense and then the distinction between personal and impersonal doesn't really arise anymore. It is the essence of anybody's sense of identity beyond form is consciousness. And that's the universal soul expressing itself as an individual.

Now, is that the answer? I'm never interested, I never asked myself, am I going to survive as this personal self? No, I don't have the sense that the person, but the essence of who I am is timeless.

I know that. I don't really need to know the details of what the essence of who I am. What's the essence of who I am, the timeless going to do in the future?

[Speaker 4] (3:14:44 - 3:14:56)

I mean, it seems to me that you blend in the individual soul and the collective oneness that for you that mushes in quite naturally. You don't find the need to make that distinction.

[Speaker 1] (3:14:57 - 3:15:56)

No, because a lot of it is just words, Buddhism, Hinduism, you have in Hinduism, Atman, the God within is Atman. The Buddhists say, no, there is no Atman, it's just emptiness. They're talking about the same thing because the Atman is formless.

So emptiness is in some ways more helpful because you can't believe in it. The moment you say that there is an Atman, you can start believing in something, you have another mental concept. So the Buddha was very good at making it very hard for people to believe in what he said, very hard because you can't say, we believe in emptiness.

Well, maybe they do it in the Buddhist monasteries, but it wasn't meant to be said like that. It wasn't meant to be realized. And then the moment you realize this, of course, it's Atman and emptiness is the same.

[Speaker 2] (3:15:56 - 3:25:21)

The, from this soul, from individual souls, and as we agree that we, we see in each other the Atman, the, the, the, the, I've thought of, thought, well, it's not a thought, it's the soul is awareness. And since my guru said to love everybody, I said the soul was loving awareness. And when he said to me, love everybody, I, first of all, the politicians, I, boy, I mean, I love them.

I mean, I mean, certain ones I could bear, but I can't, I said, Maharaji, I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't love everybody.

And that was my ego, because ego judging, judging, judging, judging. Soul doesn't judge. But now I live in the soul and I can love the walls and the ceiling and all of you and me and the wheelchair and, and Eckhart and everybody.

You too. And I just, I, I thought I was, I was psychotic because, because as I love the wall, it gets closer. And the love becomes melding to me and to the wall and the trees and the ocean.

Because I think that we, we, we are one, but we will only feel that when we, when we love everything. Love everything. And when I was, I was up here, my ego, I was judging and judging and, and judging myself.

And love that person, but love that person, and love that person. But the soul, you, you like the ocean of love. You're floating in the ocean of love.

And that makes you love everything, including that wall. I had a, a humorous experience. I told an audience that I loved everything.

And I said, I love this rug. And it was a, it was a restaurant. And the, the rug was spotted.

And it would, I could live that, love that. And a friend of mine, Mickey Lamley was coming, came up, had been in the audience. And he said, look, I, I, I love the trees that GoGam painted, but I can't love that rug.

I said, judging, judging, judging. And so, so he sent me for my 80th birthday, a piece of rug. And with a spot in the middle.

And he said, maybe you'd like to substitute this for your guru on the wall. I, I wouldn't have, I, I, he didn't see that I could do that. And he was losing, he was losing by his judging mind.

Because I was moving towards oneness. With love.

[Speaker 1] (3:25:30 - 3:32:06)

That's interesting, you should mention the walls and what looks like inanimate objects. I also find often I, I pick up an object, it could be maybe just a bar of soap or a pen. And there is an appreciation of its, that its existence, just a moment of appreciating.

The mind could explain it and say, well, that's because ultimately everything emanates from the one, assumes a form, and then changes again. So ultimately, whatever you see or perceive is an emanation of the one. And if you see, if you recognize the one in yourself, you can recognize it in any form.

And one wouldn't usually call that love. But in a deeper sense, it is, it is a love, it is an appreciation of whatever is around you. And again, it's to do with the world of form, to live in that balance between relating in the world of form and being rooted in the formless, which traditionally perhaps would be called spirit, whatever.

So in this, this dance, and in yourself, you can sense, and this is, I'll just describe a brief moment when we were driving here today. There's always, of course, there's this temporary body sitting in the car. And there's the mind, there's a name attached to it, and a personal identity.

So you're always, there's two of you here, so to speak. Don't take it all too literally, it's just using pointers only. There's two of you here, the form, this is Eckhart, the spiritual teacher, concept, who is going to meet another spiritual teacher, another concept, and they're going to have a dialogue.

And there was very little of that. In the back, in the periphery of consciousness, I knew that that was also true. But the essential truth was, here's a space of consciousness moving and perceiving.

So at any moment, you can be either more on the side of form, or you can be more on the side of the formless. And the most satisfying way to live is to be more in the dimension of the formless. So as I was traveling in the car, I was really not there as a person, but simply as a space of consciousness.

There was no thought, when there's no thought, that's what happens, just that. And then, if a person were traveling to an important event, how can a person not be anxious? The thinking would arise, how is it going to work out?

What's he going to say? What am I going to do? Are they going to like us?

All kinds of stuff will happen. And really, the essence of it all is to be able to be, and I know the people here, and the people who are tuning in from elsewhere, are able to recognize the truth of what I'm saying. And that is, more and more humans are now able to enter that state where they don't need to think, think.

The compulsion to think goes, and thinking is replaced by presence, stillness, a lot

beautiful space of stillness. So if you can be, at any moment, be that, and you still know, of course, you're still a person for a while, and there's no need when somebody asks you, how old are you, or what is your name? You don't need to say, I am nameless and timeless.

You can still go with the conventions and say, well, that's my age, and that's my name. You're quite a normal, you use the conventions of form, you still can operate in the world of form, but you're rooted somewhere else in the spacious consciousness. For a while, when the transition happened to me, I was so much in the space that for a while, I couldn't operate on the level of form very well.

And then after a few years, the balance came back. That's, so really the essence, I think you will agree, I'm sure, is freedom from thought to access that dimension in yourself. Ramana Maharshi said, the true criterion, whether you are making progress on the spiritual path, that's why somebody asked him that question, how can I measure my progress on the spiritual path?

And Ramana Maharshi said, the degree of absence of thinking is the measure of progress on your spiritual path. It's easy, now you know.

[Speaker 4] (3:32:15 - 3:33:05)

You mentioned earlier the word karma, and I wanted to ask you something about that. I think that many people would say that the sudden awakening, Eckhart, that you had was some kind of fabulous good karma, extraordinary karmic grace itself. Ram Dass, your experience meeting your guru, Neem Karoli Baba, and the kind of heart awakening that happened, very good karma, extraordinary karma.

And then your stroke, being stroked, somebody might say, well, that doesn't look like such good karma to me. In fact, that looks kind of like yucky karma. And I'm curious what you feel about that, both of you, this idea of the good and bad karma of our lives.

[Speaker 2] (3:33:08 - 3:41:33)

Well, this is this question of grace and karma. And my meeting my guru, he knew that was going to happen. And because my knowing that, my knowing that and seeing his mind, knowing his awareness, it would make me think of grace.

I was graced to have this meeting. And I would think this, his grace to me. But I think it was my awareness of his awareness that led me to that conclusion.

Because if he had awareness of my life through my entire life, I mean, my mother died of a spleen. Illness. And my guru said, she was big in the stomach.

And big, big in the stomach. And, and, and this is, this is all in Hindi. And he, and then,

and he said, and then, and then it was the spleen.

He, he, and the word spleen he gave in English. It was my mother's dying was being used to help me, help me. That was, that was a Siddhi, a power he had.

And that's what led me to, led me to say it was grace. In fact, I could, I just live in grace. Because like I was a psychologist.

A psychologist, I wouldn't, I wouldn't read the Bhagavad Gita. I'd be, that funny book. And then I, I, down the hall from me in my office was Tim Leary.

And, and so, and so I took mushrooms. And that opened me up to meet Maharaji. And to meet the Bhagavad Gita.

I look at all these stages. And I had, and my guru knew that. And that's, that's grace.

That's grace.

[Speaker 1] (3:41:58 - 3:52:26)

I don't see grace as happening as the result necessarily of good karma. Grace can erupt at any stage. It can erupt into bad karma.

It can erupt into good karma. It's somehow through another dimension, something comes in. In my case, I would say it came because of bad karma.

Without all the suffering, having a childhood that was unhappy. Parents continuously fighting and no harmony in the environment. Lack of, often lack of money.

And then they got divorced. And it was great shame for me when I was 10. Not many parents were divorced at that time.

So I had to hide that fact. And countless things came in. My dad, I loved him on one level.

And on another level, I hated him. I had a dream because he was like a powder pack that could erupt at any powder, like an unexploded bomb. They could erupt at any moment.

So I lived my whole childhood with an unexploded, well, often the unexploded bomb exploded. So that's not good karma. And so the young adult became unhappy.

It had absorbed unhappiness from the environment and so on. And so all that's not good karma. But because of that bad karma, the suffering became unbearable.

And then a surrender happened when the suffering became unbearable. And there was the eruption suddenly of grace. Now the question may arise.

I may not be able to answer it, but I'll ask it. The fact that surrender happened in the midst of the suffering is that must be grace. That's probably right.

So who knows? Surrender happened. And with surrender, grace could suddenly flow in fully.

Grace is the essence of who you are coming through the form so that in grace, then you're not the density of the form lessens. And as it lessens, grace is able to flow through. The density of the form lessens through surrender or acceptance of the simple thing.

For example, let's say acceptance of the present moment as it is, as a spiritual practice. If you make that your spiritual practice, you may not succeed all the time. That's fine.

Have compassion with yourself. And if you don't succeed in accepting what is, then accept that at this moment, I can't accept what is. So you have another level of acceptance behind the non-acceptance.

I can accept that anger arises in me at this moment. That's what is. If I deny it, oh, I should be accepting.

Why can't I accept the present moment? Or even better, the mind talk, you have two people. Why can't you?

You see, you can't do it. You failed again. That's the self-talk of the ego.

Instead, be compassionate. So when you cannot accept, then recognize that and allow the emotion to be there. You still have some space then.

And so there's still grace because grace is space really. Oh, the words are quite similar actually, grace and space. Grace is when the space comes into the inner, the spaciousness of the unconditioned divine consciousness comes into your life.

So the quickest way of inviting grace into your life is, as I sometimes put it, become friendly with the is-ness of this moment, no matter what form it takes, because it already is anyway. So why not say yes? Because it is, doesn't mean you can't take action, but at the moment it is.

So in other words, you go with what, it's an expression, you go with the flow of life and the flow is always here and now. You never go against it. But so this is what is always the starting point is the is-ness of this moment.

So that's the, then if with that acceptance, the gate is open for grace to come in. If you complain about the difficulties or the unsatisfactory nature of the present moment, the door is closed. Or let's say the shutters are closed, the sunlight can't come in.

It doesn't mean you're more powerful than the sun. The sun isn't concerned about your shutters. But so when you deny this, you are somehow against the present moment or you treat it only as a means to an end because there is a more important place I want to get to.

Grace can't operate in your life or you only get a trickle just to keep you going, just an occasional trickle occasionally when you go, oh, look at that sunset. And for a moment, the complaining entity subsides. And there's a moment where grace can come in and you can live on that for three weeks, one sunset.

But of course, that's only a trickle. And so to go from form to formlessness is done by accepting whatever form arises in the present moment, whatever form this moment takes. Immediately, so well, that's what is.

With the acceptance of form, the formless opens up in you. And the ultimate truth of that is in the image of the crucifixion, which I see as goes beyond religion or anything. Some people dislike it.

They say, oh, I don't like the image of this man on the cross. It's all to do with suffering and it's unhealthy and so on. But there is a deep meaning there that for a long time perhaps could not be expressed in an abstract way.

And that meaning is, here you have the image of complete suffering of a human. He's nailed to the cross, which is a torture instrument. And this human is able to surrender and accept not my will, but thy will be done.

And then suddenly the torture instrument becomes a symbol of the divine. Isn't that strange? The torture instrument has become a symbol of the divine.

So through acceptance, whatever looks like an obstacle or even a dreadful thing becomes transformed. Every situation that's accepted deeply, and if it's a very big thing like a crucifixion, there needs to be very deep acceptance. And immediately there's a transformation.

So the grace is hiding also in that which looks dreadful. The dreadful sufferings that we see all around us, they are there, but it's hiding. And you can only see the truth of this in yourself.

I'm not saying anybody should believe in that. You have to find out for yourself that grace is hiding in what the seemingly dreadful things even in little things that go wrong, but even more so in big things that go wrong, so to speak. And ultimately you see it's not wrong.

It didn't go wrong that what it looks like in the moment when you judge it. So that's the inviting grace into your life through bringing this deep yes to the present moment. Then

your evolution accelerates.

And the more you do that, the less you need the disasters because you cooperate with the flowering of consciousness. Consciousness wants to flower into this dimension, in this dimension. So it's welcoming really what is.

[Speaker 2] (3:52:26 - 3:52:32)

Yeah, that was my stroke. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:52:32 - 3:52:33)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (3:52:35 - 3:56:21)

That I was in the hospital and I looked at all the doctors, nurses, my family, my friends were all, you have a stroke. And I felt by their minds rubbing off, I was feeling some terrible thing has happened. And there was a picture on the wall of Maharaji and he was, this is, this stroke is grace.

And I, there are three fellows here. They're my medical team. And I wouldn't have met them.

I wouldn't have met them. And we share philosophy and medical things. But I had the stroke.

So that was a grace. And then I had wrote, I had, before my stroke, I had a book, How Can I Help? It's called How Can I Help?

And I was feeling, I was helping. And after the stroke, I wrote a book, How Can You Help Me? I wouldn't have, I wouldn't have thought it possible.

That I would, I was so dependent and find in myself. And I learned a lot about dependency. And that was, and that was positive, positive.

[Speaker 1] (3:56:23 - 3:57:56)

Many of you have probably seen the film made of Ram Dass's life called Fierce Grace. I love that title. Because when something major like that happens, it really is fierce.

And when surrender happens there, it takes you very deep. So it's when fierce grace comes into your life, then that potential is there for going very deep. And that fierce grace burns up the illusory self.

It's the fire in which the ego gets burned up. It can also be a place where the ego gets strengthened through saying, oh, dreadful, dreadful. It's all what happened to me.

Life, how can life do that to me? How can God do that to me? Why did that happen to me?

That blocks it, what is potentially a huge opening into burning up of, one could say, thousands of years of accumulations are burned up in that fire. So that's perhaps good to know for anybody who is at this moment facing a major, very major challenge in life.

[Speaker 4] (3:58:02 - 3:58:19)

In just a couple of moments, we're going to open up to your questions and questions from our online audience as well. But before we do, there's a couple of people here, so we're just going to have to wait.

[Speaker 1] (3:58:24 - 3:58:32)

He's saying that the questions are nameless. People didn't write down their names, which is just as well. It's fine.

[Speaker 4] (3:58:33 - 3:59:21)

Before we go to these, I just had one last question that I wanted to ask you both. Ram Dass, you've mentioned a couple of times your relationship with Maharaji and how important he's been in your life. And I know that people actually look to the two of you, some people look to the two of you as a kind of guru figure for them, believe it or not.

I've seen the photos in people's homes. And I'm curious, if somebody does look to you in that way, how do you think they could benefit the most from that relationship?

[Speaker 1] (3:59:31 - 4:05:20)

Shall I go? Oprah said to me, you're not a guru, are you? I said, no, of course not.

I don't see myself, of course, as a guru. I do know some people look at a photo at first I was shocked when somebody told me they had their photo on their, my photo on their desk. And I thought, what for?

But I then remembered, I saw a photo of, I still have it, Ramana Maharshi. There's a particular one photo of Ramana Maharshi that has incredible light coming through. His eyes.

And I remember years ago, looking at that photo and feeling, sensing that deep stillness and peace and aliveness. But I also knew that that was not the form I was looking at, that was in me. I could sense that and I could see the reflection of that peace and aliveness in the photo also.

So it was a self-recognition. It acted a little bit like a mirror and it was a self-recognition.

But what this mirror shows is not the, it doesn't mirror the outer form to you.

It mirrors the inner essence. Whenever you look at somebody, if the photo was taken of an awake being or even a person who at that moment is free of thought and in a state of just awareness and something comes through the eyes that points to that. It is recognized by something in you when you look at, it's nothing to do with the person whatsoever.

And so what you sense is your own essential reality, reflected back to you by somebody who is free of all the stuff that usually covers it up. There's a line in the Course in Miracles, which is supposed to be Jesus talking, but of course it just means an expression of the awakened consciousness. So Christ, let's say Christ, Jesus is the person, Christ is the formless.

So it says in that line says, in the first person, I, meaning I, Christ or Jesus, I have nothing that you do not have except that I have nothing else. And so I'm now quite happy with people looking at my photo or looking at me as long as they don't think they're looking at a person. The person is there on the surface.

It's not important. You could say it's the window frame. What you see, what you put with your senses is the window frame.

But the thing that happens, the important thing is the light that comes through the window. And the moment you recognize it, it's in you because it's you that you recognize it. Ah, that's how the reflection works.

You can also, I recommend looking at, occasionally you can look it's into somebody else's eyes. And the similar thing can happen if you both are able to enter the state of aware presence while you look into each other's eyes, there's cessation of thinking. What's left when thinking ceases?

Just awareness, pure, unconditioned consciousness. And you look at the other and suddenly there is no other. There is a merging of in the feeling of awareness.

It's a beautiful practice where you transcend the personal in yourself and in the other. And that's a beautiful way of connecting. And so you see yourself in the other, there's the merging.

That's a similar, it's a lovely spiritual practice if you don't overdo it. It's just from time to time. And then you do the same in any situation.

When you look at a human being, you're not conceptualizing that human being and you're looking at yourself, the essential, not looking, but sensing the consciousness in the other through being consciousness yourself. And so it's all works the same way. So how do you feel about people looking at your photo?

[Speaker 2] (4:05:23 - 4:06:07)

I say to them, if you met a real one, you'd know. You are the real one. Yes, so are you.

And so is everybody here. Ramana Maharshi, that picture, oh boy, yum, yum, yum.

[Speaker 1] (4:06:12 - 4:06:32)

That's the, I read that the, when that picture was taken of Ramana Maharshi, the photographer asked, no, Ramana Maharshi said to the photographer, is there enough light? And the photographer said to him, you are the light. And it worked.

[Speaker 4] (4:06:42 - 4:07:00)

We have a question here from the audience that I think is really important as a part of our conversation, which is how can you love violence, crime, and starvation? To name a few examples, I'd add in microphone noise. How can you love these things?

[Speaker 1] (4:07:02 - 4:10:43)

I'll start. You don't love what people do, you love who they are in their essence. And what often what they do is deluded.

It's based on delusion because they don't know who they are. So unconsciousness operates through those humans. You don't love what they do, but you look, whenever you meet a human being, even if it's the human being is a criminal or has perpetrated acts of violence, there is in them somewhere something that is pure, that is the essence of who they are.

And that's when you look and if the human being is heavily burdened by egoic delusion or a heavy pain body, you need to be more intensely present with that human being. And it can happen that this also applies to a human being who is mentally unbalanced. It is sometimes possible if you're absolutely present, you draw out, not through an act of will, but just because it happens, you draw out of that human being something that is beyond the delusion, the essence of who they are.

It may only be temporary, but it's there. So you don't, you love the individual human and how can you love a disturbing noise? Love is not necessarily an active thing.

Love often is in the allowing. It's the gesture of the Virgin Mary, for example. There's a feminine quality there, which is the embrace everything.

So you can embrace the loud noise, although you might get a little, a shock maybe there. That doesn't mean you resisted the noise. There's the shock and immediately after the shock, there is the allowing.

You can practice that when you bump into something. I sometimes recommend that as another spiritual practice because sometimes you bump into something with your elbow or your foot and there's a sharp pain. And usually there's the pain and immediately after the pain, you shout something.

It may be a four letter word. Usually it's four letters. And it's quite a lovely practice if you bump into something and the pain is there, but immediate acceptance and no comment or commentary or further reaction except the physical reaction.

It's just quite lovely. Oh, nothing else. So the sharp noise, you don't say, oh, I love this sharp noise.

No, it's embraced in the, I allow you to be here. That's the love really rather than I love you. No, but I allow you to be here at this moment in the way you are and the you can be a person or a situation.

I allow you to be as you are in this moment. That's love rather than feeling I love you.

[Speaker 4] (4:10:44 - 4:10:56)

This is a follow-up question here for you, Eckhart, which is, are there any instances where you are unable to accept what is anything that makes you impatient, judgmental or angry?

[Speaker 1] (4:10:57 - 4:12:58)

There are moments of anger that can happen. Usually don't last very long. There's still an awareness in the background that accepts the anger when it happens.

So one is not totally in the grip of the anger, but a space around it or sadness can arise. I sometimes cry when I see something sad or somebody dying. For example, we were walking in Italy last year, visiting a small town and the church bells were ringing.

The people with me were walking on and I was just standing at the square in front of the church and they were carrying out a coffin and some of the relatives were standing around and I wept. I don't know who died. I have no idea of that person because to me that moment was it embodied the death of every human being that ever lived and ever will live.

It embodied the impermanence of the human condition and I cried, but not it wasn't a crying of despair. There was a beauty. There was a peacefulness underneath the crying, but I did cry.

I didn't say that there should be no deaths or death is a travesty. No, there was an acceptance, but nevertheless, it's just actually a beautiful experience, but the deep sadness there was, but underneath it, there was a knowing of there is something that

doesn't die that's there. So that's how an emotional can still exist within the spaciousness.

[Speaker 4] (4:13:00 - 4:13:04)

Anything to say about loving what seems unlovable?

[Speaker 2] (4:13:07 - 4:13:08)

Something what?

[Speaker 4] (4:13:08 - 4:13:13)

Any more to say about loving what seems at first unlovable?

[Speaker 2] (4:13:16 - 4:15:20)

I love it all. I mean, even that, even that and even that and you've got to be, you bring it towards you, towards you and we all had a chance to love a dictator this year and he was a form that was causing suffering to many people. Does that make him unlovable?

I think that each form, each form is a form of God.

[Speaker 1] (4:15:38 - 4:15:44)

Sometimes in heavy disguise, heavy disguise sometimes.

[Speaker 4] (4:15:54 - 4:16:09)

There's another question here, wondering how Eckhart and Ram Dass perceive psychedelics and or sacred plant medicine, Ram Dass at this point in your life as a vehicle to explore consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (4:16:23 - 4:16:26)

The expert first.

[Speaker 2] (4:16:40 - 4:24:31)

It's great. It's great. The mushroom trip that I took and I left the group and a quiet room and I was on a couch and I saw there was somebody else in the room but the room was dark.

It's just I felt somebody else and I looked over there the corner of the room and each of my roles, my cello playing and my, they were kitsch, rolls, rolls, rolls and I, my, the Richard that my parents gave me and I said, oh, this, this drug, drug, I might, I might have amnesia or at least I have my body and I looked down and there was the couch and there was no body on it and, and I was, my eyes were open. And I, I, I, I wanted to call

help but then who wanted to call help? So all my roles are there.

My body was gone. Somebody, something, some, some and I, I rolled in the snow some hills. I rolled and rolled and I, I was at Tim's house and my father and mother's house only two blocks away.

The snowstorm was up to my knees and I walked over to their, and their, their walk, they were old and I was young and I, I shovel from the garage. I thought, I, I really, it's, it's, it's, my heart told me that I shovel there, walk, walk and I shoveled and I was really out there and then I looked up at the window and they were both, they were having peeved looks. I couldn't and there, and, but that was, I was, they were, they were, up until then, I, always other people's eyes whether I was being reasonable but they were, they were, they were peeved and I was, I danced a jig around the, around the shovel and I waved at them, smiling.

That was the first time I'd ever stand up to, to external, external whatever that was.

[Speaker 1] (4:24:32 - 4:24:33)

Authority.

[Speaker 2] (4:24:33 - 4:25:22)

Yeah, and then I found out that they were peeved. It was, it was 4.30 in the morning and I was happy with my, I was going to shovel their walk but they, they, all they live in little boxes. One doesn't shovel the walk, no, nobody shovels the walk at that hour.

[Speaker 4] (4:25:29 - 4:26:07)

Is there any more, Ram Dass, you want to say about psychoactive plants and what you consider their, oh, I mean just a sort of summary of your, well, it took me from psychology to Maharaji.

[Speaker 2] (4:26:09 - 4:26:17)

That's pretty good. That's pretty good.

[Speaker 1] (4:26:20 - 4:26:25)

Yes, yes, that says it. That's pretty good. So it must have been powerful.

[Speaker 2] (4:26:26 - 4:28:03)

Yes, yes. Look, I never tell anybody to do it on their own or to do it by my say-so. All I say is what happened to me and I, boy, I, ah, yum, yum, yum, yum, yum.

And I'm being, I'm being facetious but people don't, don't realize these are very, very

powerful plants and they should not be used, well, they shouldn't, should or shouldn't, I don't, they've been used, they should be, I shouldn't be, they should, God should be your co-pilot.

[Speaker 4] (4:28:04 - 4:28:06)

Very good, thank you.

[Speaker 2] (4:28:07 - 4:28:07)

Yeah.

[Speaker 4] (4:28:08 - 4:28:12)

And Descartes? I think our questioner really wanted your perception.

[Speaker 1] (4:28:20 - 4:33:12)

Of course, I can only go on the basis of my own experience, which is very limited. I'll tell you very briefly what it is. And one quite recent, quite a recent experience, it's amazing that it took me so long to try a pot, but we were in Amsterdam last year and somebody got me high quality pot to smoke and I thought, well, I might as well try it.

Because people often ask me questions about it. It's like, is it like meditation or is it useful? So I smoked and what I said when it took effect was it's like a maple syrup for the brain.

It felt like the mind is kind of, and I can see it can be a wonderful thing for somebody whose mind is very active and it finally slows down for once. Now, since my mind is not that active, it wasn't, I didn't feel it as great or even wanted to do it again, but it was interesting, and I can see how it could be helpful to some people who are burdened by a dreadful mind that never stops, not as a permanent measure, but perhaps to open a door and then go on and actually meditate and practice presence and so on. And similarly, acid, I don't know when it was, 15 years ago, I was already doing counseling and doing little workshops and often people said, what is it, was acid helpful?

I said, I don't know, I haven't tried it. And finally, somebody got me some and I took it and again, very limited experience. My experience was simply that the sense perceptions became extremely heightened.

So like everything was shouting at me, the colors, the smells, the physical sensory touch, everything was like turning up the volume on everything. And it's so much so I can, I could see, I didn't lose any awareness. So the awareness was there observing what was happening, it was interesting.

And I immediately realized that for some people, it also stops their mind because when

you perceive so in such intensity, you have no time to comment on what you're perceiving. So you're just bombarded by sense perceptions. So the mind will shut up for a while and you just go, wow.

And this is the tip experience some people have with looking at a teapot and finding incredible depth and aliveness there, which I already have without it. I can look at a teapot and feel its aliveness. Maybe not, it's not shouting at me, but there's a subtle, there's a subtle thing there it has a presence.

So I don't need things to shout at me. But I can see how for somebody who is totally immersed in mental noise, it can be again an opening. That's really all it is.

There's also a sacred dimension, of course, to other substances like mushrooms and so on, which I have not experienced. That goes back thousands of years that practice as part of, not as a recreation, but as part of a sacred journey within that cultural context. And I think that's probably extremely valid.

And it may have to wait for another lifetime before I try that.

[Speaker 4] (4:33:17 - 4:33:39)

We have a question here from someone in the online audience who says, when someone has dementia or Alzheimer's, their being seems to disappear. As I spend time with my 93-year-old mom, I start to question what it is you're pointing to. Can you speak to this?

[Speaker 1] (4:33:47 - 4:36:37)

There's sometimes an intermediate stage in Alzheimer's when people don't remember their problems. I had a friend whose mother had Alzheimer's and in that intermediate stage, she, for the first time in her life, she became happy because during that intermediate stage, she couldn't remember her problems. She was beginning to forget who she was.

So that was something that also happens, of course, when you become more present, but that's very different. When you become more present, you rise above thinking. And when you develop this loss of memory or even when you take certain things like alcohol, then you begin to fall below thinking, which can be quite pleasant if thinking is a torture for you, which for many people it is because they torture themselves through their mind.

If you fall below thinking, then you go, ah. But there's no growth in awareness. You're moving towards sleep.

So in the intermediate stage of Alzheimer's, there are some people, it seems, who experience that freedom from the mind, but then you go more into it and you... I see the mind or the brain as something through which the non-local consciousness that pervades

the entire universe assumes a particular form. So the brain or the mind is an instrument for consciousness to move through into this dimension and a focal point for consciousness.

And when the brain decays, which seems to be the case with Alzheimer, the brain can no longer fulfill the function of being the focal point for consciousness and consciousness then withdraws from there. And that gives the appearance that the being that was there is gradually disappearing. And it is.

It's a slow death. You die before the physical vehicle dies. So the consciousness can no longer move through the brain, the mind, and so it goes back.

And what is left with is then just the beginning of death of the form. So the mind form dies before the physical vehicle dies. That's how I see it.

The consciousness is still there, but it's no longer in this dimension.

[Speaker 4] (4:36:42 - 4:36:56)

Ram Dass, you said something interesting when we were talking previously. You said that the stroke affected your body, but not who you are. And I wonder if you could comment on that.

[Speaker 2] (4:37:08 - 4:39:29)

This is a vehicle in this plane of consciousness. I'm using it. I am using it.

I am not identified with it. So it's either, so I've said the body had the stroke. I didn't have a stroke.

And when I go into the present moment, which is not time and space, it's infinite. That's who I am. That's who I am.

And I don't think I'm ego either. They're all ego and body. They are part of this incarnation.

But I am not part of this incarnation because I'm just visiting this incarnation.

[Speaker 4] (4:39:31 - 4:40:11)

And then I just wanted to end with one final question to make a full circle from where we started. We started talking about love, not as an emotion, but as an experience of the present moment, as an aspect of the present moment. And to end, I'm wondering if you were each only able to give us one pointer to how we could tune to this love in the now.

What would that pointer be?

[Speaker 1] (4:40:38 - 4:44:17)

I'm sure you all know it already. Two days ago, we visited Ram Dass. And when I left, I saw the license plate on his car, on the license plate.

It had, there was a normal license number, but above and below it said, I'd rather be here now. As a, of course, the usual thing is I'd rather be fishing. I'd rather be golfing.

So I'd rather be here now. Be here now is really the key because embracing the present, acknowledging the present, realizing that there is only ever this, is really all that's needed to be the presence rather than to be the mind-made entity. So I sometimes put it like this.

It just didn't occur to me when I was writing the power of now, it came later. You are the now. You are the now in essence.

On the surface, now is what happens. In the depths of now, the now is the space in which it happens. So that which happens is the world of form coming and going and coming and going.

And the space in which it happens is the unconditioned, formless, timeless, unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested, pure consciousness itself, the one or the light of the one. You could say that perhaps it's just, it's the light of the one. And so be the now, be the space for what happens rather than continuously reacting to what happens and being hypnotized by the world of form.

So it's the de-hypnosis. The world of form includes the thinking. Every thought is a thought form, very hypnotic.

Every thought says, look at me, look at me, follow me here. No, follow me. And then you go on for hours.

You follow the thought which leads to another thought and it draws you in, it draws gravity, gravitational pull. And then you become a person who lives like that, completely absent, only in here. Even when they meet somebody, they go, they don't see you, only their thoughts about you.

So that's stepping out of all that into presence. Be the now, be the space for what is.

[Speaker 2] (4:44:29 - 4:45:41)

It's hard to top that. When you meet somebody and they say, who are you? You give him a name or your role or something like that.

But when you are alone and you say, who am I? There is, there is, there is awareness and love. And you can, I am, I am loving awareness.

I am loving awareness. I am loving awareness. I am loving awareness.

[Speaker 4] (4:45:51 - 4:45:54)

Many thanks, everybody. Many thanks to F.R. Columbus.

[Speaker 11] (4:46:19 - 4:46:23)

I don't know how you'd label this question. Is this on?

[Speaker 5] (4:46:25 - 4:47:09)

I've met some people or had conversations with people who are going through what might be called a crisis of awakening. And it seems like they have, the identification with self is mostly fallen away. And they're in a kind of terror.

And they feel like they're going insane. And I kind of, I mean, I'm not there myself, but I've had those times when it's like giving up all control over everything feels kind of scary. And I just wondered if you could speak to that.

[Speaker 1] (4:47:10 - 7:52:55)

Okay, thank you. Yes, I've also encountered people like that. The mind feels suddenly scared.

The ego is still there to some extent. And it becomes a little panicky. I'm not in control anymore.

But there is a place so one can lose oneself in that. But I would advise a person like that to look for a place that is not confused inside, a place that is not scared. Many people say they're confused or scared.

But really the way out of it is really always a fuller acknowledgement of the present moment. Because the rest of it, all that confusion and feeling scared is you're not in the present moment, you're in your mind again. And your mind is saying, oh, my life is falling apart.

I have to start worrying again because otherwise it's all going to fall apart. So once you realize that you've moved out, the realization needs to be there of that, okay, I'm lost in the mind again. Okay, you're not lost because you know that you're lost.

The moment you realize it's happening, for a while you may not realize it's happening. You're so identified with your panicky thoughts that you're completely in them. You don't even know what is happening to you.

And then time may pass while you're completely in your thoughts. Oh, I think I'm going mad. I just don't know.

I can't figure things out anymore. I don't, they're not, I can't work things out. I don't know.

The mind says you should have opinion about everybody and I don't anymore. You shouldn't have an opinion about every situation you're in and your life. I don't know what to think about my life anymore.

That's dreadful. That's the mind. And of course the opposite is true.

If you don't know what to think about your life anymore, then you're beginning to wake up and realize there's no such thing as your life. There's only life. Your life is a mental construct.

It's a story, the story of me. So it's always the moment you realize it's happening or if you're trying to help somebody, bring your attention to the present moment. This is the exit point out of confusion.

You can't be confused when your attention moves into the present moment because the present moment is always simple. There's always a simplicity about it. The complexity is in the mind structures, the unobserved mind of the ego.

So simply take your attention into the present moment and then confusion suddenly dissolves because the mind says, I need to work something out. I need to understand something. No, you don't.

All you need to respond to this moment. Either this moment may require action or it may not require action. Just be there for this moment.

And then it becomes simple. You cannot do more than one thing at a time. For example, in this moment, no matter how much you have to do, you can only do one thing.

Well, you can do two things, but it gets hard. Basically, you have to do one thing at a time and give it your attention or do nothing and bring attention to sense perceptions. Look around and get a sense of what this moment feels, what it is, what does it mean, this moment.

First of all, it means what you see and perceive because that's this moment. And that's already a revelation because you might have been so trapped in your mind that you were completely unaware of your surroundings. And you didn't realize there was a beautiful tree there and there are clouds there.

You didn't realize that there's a sound of the wind outside. You didn't realize that you are breathing in the air. You didn't realize that all those things around you are vitally alive.

You didn't realize it because you were stuck in your head. Thinking about your problems. And so the beginning of the present moment is that, oh, and then you can go a little

deeper.

Then you can experience the present moment as the energy field in your body, as the aliveness in your body. And then you can go even deeper and experience the present moment as the awareness of all this, rather than the present moment isn't the flower as such. The flower appears in the present moment, but essentially what the present moment is, it's the consciousness in which you see the flower.

Otherwise there would be no flower. Remove the consciousness. I don't know what's left.

No flower. You all know the famous saying, the tree in the forest, if a tree falls in the forest and there's nobody there to hear it, does it make a noise? And of course it doesn't because noise implies not only a sensory organ, it also applies a consciousness that's perceiving through the sensory organ that brings about what we call noise.

And without that, there's no noise. And you can even follow that up and ask other similar questions. But what I'm pointing to is the present moment in essence is not the things.

The things appear in the space of the present moment. It's always present moment. You can't get out of that.

Your life is always one with now. Your life and now are one. If you doubt that, then let me know one day when you can say, my life is not now.

Or maybe you remember when it wasn't now. Not possible. Life and now is synonymous.

Life is now, now is life. But the mind says, yeah, but what does that mean? Isn't that just words?

No, it's more than words. The words are pointing to a realization. And that is, whatever appears has to appear in the present moment, but in itself is not the present moment.

It is a form that appears in the space of now. Everybody in this room or wherever the body is is a form that appears in the space of now. Whatever happens, whatever thought comes, whatever emotion is felt is a form that appears in the space of now.

And that now is consciousness, timeless. Ever present. You are that.

I am that. So that's really what the present moment is. So ultimately it's yourself, it's consciousness, and you are consciousness.

So bringing attention to the now takes people out of confusion. The now begins with sense perceptions. So encourage people or do it to yourself if you find you become lost in your mind, come into your senses first.

Touch something, whatever, any surface, feel it. Then look. Already confusion subsides

because your attention gets away from thinking into the sense, the act of perception.

Then listen. Even less and less confusion. What is there to confused about right here?

Nothing. Breathing. Then breathing.

And breathing takes attention into the inner body. Alive, it's alive. Where's the confusion?

It's gone. You stopped giving attention to your thoughts, the confusion is gone. And then you go even deeper into just the spaciousness of stillness.

No confusion in there. And then it's fine. Every time that happens, use that process of reorientation of focus of your consciousness into now.

So this is the advice you can give and you do it with people when they come to you in a state of confusion. Say, okay, sit there. Okay.

Look around. Look, touch something. Look at this.

Listen to the rain. Listen to the wind. Listen to the birds.

Listen to the car. Be there as the presence for it. Confusion can end very quickly that way.

Present moment is the exit point out of confusion is the point of exit out of your mind. It's always there. You just have to acknowledge it.

So, and when it happens again, same process, no more confusion. It's a shift for people. You get drawn back into the old consciousness and step out again.

That's why we call the awakening process. For most people, it is a, we are transitional. Most of the people who are going through this, we're transitional beings from, it's a very significant and incredible thing from one way of being, one state of consciousness that's been there for thousands and thousands of years to a different state of consciousness.

And so we live, many people live in two worlds, in two states, still shifting. And gradually, awareness takes over from continuous thinking. And then it's so different.

It's like, I sometimes call it as you, as I say, at the end of the new earth, a new species is emerging on the planet. One could almost say that. We used to look the same, but your inner state is so different from the normal insane state that it's like a completely new species.

And yet it's already arising in you. It's not something that you need to arrive at some future point. I want to become a new species.

It's already arising. Christina says she lives either in Austria or in Australia, AU. I crave the experience of God's love.

And although I practice being in the now at every realization, I still have not known the experience of the beloved. What more can I do? Well, she hasn't found God's love yet.

God's love because she doesn't realize that her love is God's love. She may not have realized that when she appreciates beauty, wherever it may be, and ultimately there's beauty everywhere, even in the most insignificant things, like the texture in the wood on the floor, even the artificial light, all that is beauty. When you appreciate beauty, it's a form of love.

When you feel gratitude for what is, it's a form of love. And that love, where does it come from? Where does it arise?

In you. In you, when you don't create artificial expectations through mental concepts, such as where is God's love? When you don't create these artificial concepts and expectations, then you realize that the moment you relinquish the concepts in relating to the world and other humans and nature, then there is a certain, an outflow from you of acknowledgement, an outflow of appreciation for every life form and that can only be there when you're not imposing concepts on things and life forms.

There's an open space. In that open space, there's a flow, a love flow of energy. It's reciprocal.

There's a flow of energy towards this flower and there's a reflection back from the flower. Even more so with human beings, when you look into the eyes of another human being and you are not thinking, just be an empty space, then there's love. You're not creating the conceptual barrier between yourself and the other.

Without the conceptual barrier, there's a realization of oneness, a direct realization, not because you have to convince yourself well, we are all one and I have to try and love this person whom I really don't like at all. It doesn't work. But then there's a true realization.

The oneness is there naturally when you no longer impose the divisive concepts, the judgments, but allow what is to be. Then there is an outflow of love. Look into the eyes of another human being and don't think who that is, who you are.

If the other can meet you, the same, it's wonderful thing to meet and you have the flow of consciousness between you and you really, there's a knowing then of oneness that doesn't need any explanations in the mind. And with it comes that, we could call it the feeling of oneness, which is love. What is love then is simply the realization on an experiential level of oneness.

That's love. And what does that mean? It means you recognize that your essence is

there also in the other, your essence, you see it reflected in the other.

That's love. Love is not, I need you. That's the ego's version of love.

I need you. So love is already fullness. It's already the fullness of being.

You can only block it if you have some concept in your head that you're looking for God's love. He's not showing me any love. Why isn't he showing me any love?

I need God's love. Are you hearing me, God? And of course it's reflected back to you.

When you emanate that, it's reflected back to you from others who may think you're a wonderful person, but that's not really how it works. It's not that you become a wonderful person. It's you become a non-person and the light of the divine light shines through you.

Why does it shine through you? Because you've become transparent. The person has lost its density.

So you don't, it doesn't improve you as a person. It erodes you as a person. I must become worthy of God's love.

All these things don't really work. So some people say God is love. I would put it a little differently because love really implies a certain duality.

The beloved, the lover, and the beloved, love. But of course in God, there's no duality. There's only oneness.

So what does it mean when we say God is love? Well, I would put it this way. God is the recognition of oneness in the world of duality, which means love is a way for God to come into this world and recognize him, her, itself.

Because this world is the world of duality. And then comes the recognition of oneness. And that's God.

The birth of God into this world is love. And it's up to you to be the opening for that. But to be the opening for that, the person needs to substantially dissolve.

Just enough to still go around this world and pretend that you are a person. And that's where we're going evolutionary on evolutionary level into this transmutation, transformation. I'm always amused when I see things about people speculating about advanced species, extraterrestrials and aliens.

They think the highest manifestations of human civilization will be with more and more sophisticated technology. That's all they can ever think of. That the aliens who are so highly developed must have a technology that is so far beyond ours.

They've never considered, or it seems very few, considered the possibility they may have no technology whatsoever because they don't need it. And they're not picking up our radio signals because they don't have any receivers and they're not interested. So the transmutation is into something, into a different species.

We're not just improving who we are now and getting better at what we have now, which is all extremely limited. And I'm certain that this technology will come to an end too and something else will happen that is far more powerful. And in a way, this is already part of it.

The art, of course, is to be still even while you talk. How is that possible? That seems a paradox.

One could say it's having, sensing an inner spaciousness even while words are being formulated by your mind and coming out of your mouth. Not losing touch with that dimension of spaciousness or stillness inside. Otherwise, you're either, or you live in, you're either still as long as no noise, literal noise or metaphorical noise challenges you.

Or you get lost in thinking and doing and then you have to, oh, have to become, I have to meditate now. And then it's, but fine, at least you have that when you meditate. But the art of living is bringing the two together.

One could say space and form or formlessness and form. Form are thoughts and doing in the world of form. And the formless dimension is being or consciousness itself, the light of consciousness, spaciousness.

And one, another word we can use to describe it or point to it, that dimension of spaciousness in the background of your life that frees you from exclusive identification with a little me, the person, just personal sense of self, nothing else. Dreadful condition. Like a narrow prison.

So that, that frees you from being imprisoned in form, psychological form. And that's why sometimes it's called liberation or even salvation. And we could also call it, of course, transcendence.

The transcendent dimension to your life. That's the very essence of what is sometimes called spirituality. Nothing to do with belief systems or some or certain thoughts.

No thought in itself is spiritual because it's form. The spiritual dimension is the formless, but there's no ultimate separation between form and formlessness because even form is in essence spacious. It just appears to be form, but let's leave that aside.

We don't want to make it complicated. And so you're not dependent on external silence to be still. That would be hard.

I need silence so that I can be still. You can be still no matter what happens out there. I have often, I often talk about that.

Of course, it's non-reactive state of consciousness. Transcendent dimension. To sense it right now, I gave a talk a year or two ago in LA about the transcendent dimension in entertainment, particularly movies.

And the possibilities of bringing in that dimension through what in many cases is no more than a perpetuation of the normal unconsciousness in movies and so on. In many cases, it simply perpetuates the ignorant state of consciousness. Ignorant, not meaning lack of knowledge.

You can be totally ignorant even with a huge amount of knowledge. Ignorant means who you are beyond the form is totally unknown to you. You're completely trapped in form.

In other words, you don't know who you are. The person doesn't know who he or she is. And the collective is equally lost, of course, because it consists of millions of people who don't know who they are.

And then, of course, the nation does dreadful things because it's all based on delusional systems. So the possibilities, because everybody consumes entertainment, so-called movies and so on. There are great possibilities there for bringing in the transcendent dimension into people's consciousness, even humans who are not really open yet for that.

And yet deep down, every human longs for it. So I'd like to talk by a popular demand a little bit today about the transcendent dimension in movies. And instead of complaining how dreadful most films are, I could spend one or two hours talking about that.

I'd like to focus on what I already see is emerging in still a small number of minority of movies, various ways in which the transcendent dimension is already emerging. And that is not only helpful to you, perhaps, from the point of view of perhaps thinking, oh, I have to watch that movie, but also to become more clear of the various ways in which the transcendent dimension can be recognized in your daily life, because it all goes together, because really the movie is about human life, reflection of human life. So there are different ways in which the transcendent dimension can enter your life and continuously does, but it needs to be recognized.

So on a superficial level, I'm just going to recommend a few movies to you now. And that's why I have a piece of paper so that I remember what I want to recommend to you. And I choose movies that are readily available, mass market, most of them, not just a few movies that are hidden.

I'm sure I invite everybody to write in with their suggestions of when they have discovered the transcendent dimension in a movie or a piece of entertainment, popular

entertainment. Please let us know. Tell us how and why you see the transcendent dimension emerging in that particular work of visual art.

And then tell us what it is so that we can watch it together. And it may be helpful to everybody to see how, look for it, look for the transcendent dimension when you see him. I always do that.

Is it there or not? In most cases, of course it isn't. But you can still find it in yourself while you watch the movie and you feel the witnessing presence and all these movements appear and they're being witnessed by the conscious presence that I am.

And that's the transcendent dimension. It's not actually in the movie, but it's here. But I don't really need to see the movie to, I can just as more helpfully watch the movement of leaves on a tree than watch nonsense being enacted on the screen or a bird sitting on a branch or the clouds moving across the sky.

A few months ago, I saw, and here we start with a movie that everybody a while ago talked about. Avatar, the most successful movie in commercial terms ever. So millions of people saw it.

Transcendent dimension, is it there? Yes, I see it in two ways in which it manifests there. One is a sense that nature, the world around you, the totality of reality is, it's not spoken, but there's an underlying sense that nature is pervaded by a field of intelligence.

Intelligence is not confined to the head, the human head, but you are surrounded by a field of intelligence. In other words, everything is an aspect of consciousness. Everything participates in the one greater consciousness.

And so some humans don't know that anymore and others are in tune with that. And of course, in that movie, it's the Western humans who don't know that anymore and the alien species who are still in touch with that. So although the movie has a lot of noise to it, I'd love to have seen a little bit more.

Stillness in it. Nevertheless, it brings into the consciousness of a mass audience the sense of sacredness of nature. Even to people who are not really quite ready for that yet, perhaps, but it's there.

They may not be able to formulate it, that this is what they see there, but it brings in that the empathy with all living forms and tuning in with your attention to the field of aliveness around you, rather than the egoic sense of self pronouncing the world around you, the world of nature, as dead and becoming angry at any suggestion that there may be a greater intelligence than your little intelligence in your head. So it has transformational value, and that is the transcendent dimension is there. And the other way in which it is there in this particular film, and that's a very important one also, is that in a movie, one usually identifies with characters.

So you project yourself into a character, if it works, and then you kind of live through that particular character. And in this movie, the, you are most likely to identify, it invites you to identify not with your own species, but to identify with an alien species. And that is transcendent, that brings in the transcendent dimension because it invites you away from egoic consciousness, the collective ego, identification with the collective form of us, to identifying with something that is beyond form, that finds expression through the other species, more that which is beyond form, finds expression through the other species more than through your own species in that movie.

So it invites you to self-transcendence without talking about it, by simply watching that there is to a small, greater or lesser degree, for some to a very small degree, but you can experience a little bit of self-transcendence. That is, I'm talking about the collective self. There's a personal self, and then there's the collective for us.

You transcend that, and that's an amazing evolutionary leap. And it's perhaps relatively recent. I've been reminded a little bit of some films I saw a long time ago.

They're quite old, I believe go back to the 60s or 70s. For the first time, that was in the Planet of the Apes, where also you are invited to identify more with the other species than with the human. Now, there may be some viewers of those films who are just not able to do that yet.

There are probably some viewers of Avatar who identify with that military guy. That's okay. And then, of course, the end is not good if you identify with that military guy.

It's not a happy ending. So this is wonderful because the self-transcendence is an essential aspect of spiritual dimension. It is through self-transcendence that the spiritual dimension comes into existence.

And there are more and more people now who do not automatically identify with their country. They recognize that their country is doing awful things, insane. And they're not saying, well, there used to be a saying, I think in England, I don't know, it might originate in the 19th century or early 20th century.

Right or wrong, my country. That, of course, is the egoic state of consciousness. No matter what dreadful things my country does, it's my country.

We have evolved, we are evolving despite what you see on the news every night. We are evolving slowly. In Germany, in the 30s and 40s, it required a very high degree of consciousness not to identify with the collective unconsciousness of the nation.

And a few people by conscious choice said, I'm not going to be part of this. And they left, but that was very few. It needed enormous awareness because the pull of the collective was so strong.

The pull of the collective in the United States was still very strong in the 50s and then considerably weakened in the 60s when millions stepped out of identification with the collective. Through an act of, an act of the collective that was recognized as ultimately insane, the whole involvement in Vietnam and so on, people began to disidentify from the collective ego, the form. So that is happening more and more.

Regression is always possible. We experienced some of that in the States. Evolution doesn't go like this.

It goes in spirals. Some films have at their core a truth that everybody deep down knows. And that I believe explains the great success of some movies which on the surface may not be that great, but there's a core truth that is there.

For example, in the Matrix movie, especially the original one, the core truth is life is a dream. You're all walking around like dreamwalkers. And there is a response to that in humans, although it's not quite as the film describes.

The dream has not been created for us by the machines, but the dream, of course, is being created for us by the conditioned mind, the totally conditioned human mind. And so the movie invites you to look at the people walking around the big city. And then somebody comments, they're sitting in a car and they're watching people.

They're actually all sleepwalking. They're dreaming. Of course, that's a recurrent motive in many in the older works of literature also.

In poetry, the dreamlike nature of human existence. But dream implies that it's possible to wake up. And of course, that's the possibility also in that particular film.

It's about waking up out of the dream. Regardless of the particulars of that movie, which are not the way it is, that's fiction. But the deeper truth underlying the particulars of that movie is you are asleep, you're dreaming, but you can wake up.

And that is a truth that deep down everybody knows. And I believe that explains the success of that movie because the rest of it is just... There are certain films that point to or show you the dysfunction of normal human existence.

They don't seem to have in themselves when you say, is there a transcendent dimension in this film? Is there a spiritual dimension in this film? And you might say at first, no, I don't see it.

But I do see that there is a transcendent dimension but there's an indirect way in which the spiritual or transcendent dimension can come into a movie or into your life. And that is through the recognition of what is false in you. For example, the recognition of what your own mind is doing to you on a daily basis.

How your own mind is making you unhappy. That is becoming aware of dysfunction. And in movies, there are movies that can make you aware of a collective dysfunction in humanity.

For example, that show you the reality of warfare rather than an idolized version of it. They show you what war is really like. And you see the madness of it.

They are not saying it's mad. A movie doesn't need to, then it wouldn't be a good movie. It would be preaching.

It just shows you. And then you, therefore it becomes a creative act. The realization comes to you instead of somebody telling you something.

By watching, you realize something. And so that's a much more genuine thing than somebody telling you that war is mad. It's not necessary.

All you need to do is when you truly are presented with madness, whether it is your own mind and you see what your own mind has been doing to you for the past 20 years. And not other people and circumstances. No, it was your own mind.

Circumstances were always as they were and always are as they are. All this, the suffering, 90% of it, probably 100% generated by your mind. So, and the realization then of dysfunction is in itself part of awakening.

So this is why I say those films that show you dysfunction, whether it's personal dysfunction or how insane humans are in their personal lives or collective dysfunction, how insane humans can be in the collective, they are, there is a spiritual dimension there. Not directly, it's not directly in the movie because all the movie shows you is madness. But it enables you to recognize madness as madness rather than madness as normal life.

And that is the spiritual act. So that's why there was a movie called, in this, it's an old movie, but if you haven't seen it, I highly recommend it, *King of Hearts*, it goes back to the 60s, wait in the 66 or so. It's about an English soldier in the First World War, a very childlike man who just loves birds and loves simple things.

And he's sent into some town in France during the First World War that has been abandoned by its inhabitants. The only people left behind are the people in the lunatic asylum, the mental home. So he connects with those people and then he brings them into the empty town and they dress up and they play their games and act things out and it's beautiful.

And then the normal people come back in, the two armies, soldiers come back in. Finally, they confront each other. There's a row of soldiers belonging to the Germans and they're the English or the French on the other side and they all lift their guns and they all start,

they all shoot each other.

And then the both rows, they all collapse. And they're, this is what the, it's a, it is tragic and humorous. Humor, another important part of that.

This is a very subtle thing. Is it possible to still have humor when you watch that? And on, in this film, it's, this film succeeds in showing you the madness and at the same time inviting you not to disidentify from it, to recognize it as madness and even smile at it and say, oh, this is too absurd.

But it's not saying anything, it's just showing. And it ends, of course, the end is wonderful when the normal, the armies come back in. The so-called mad people are taken back to their mental home and then this soldier then stands there and he has to decide now, is he going to go back to his army unit?

And his final decision is he's going to the mental home. The implication, of course, being there's more sanity there than in the outside world. And that is a great work of art.

And a very powerful message. There have been a few films about war that were equally powerful. There was a, there's a famous book written by a German writer.

The book is called All Quiet on the Western Front. He fought in the First World War. He was a soldier in the First World War and then he wrote a book about it.

And the book became very well known and then was made into a movie in Germany and then he became, he had to leave the country because all the people who were not able to disidentify from the collective called him a traitor, the author. And then again, that movie and the book by the way, many of the things I say here which could also apply to literature when you read literature. So the self-transcendence and so on can also appear there.

But we're talking here about movies. Anti-war films do not make pronouncements against war. They show you the reality of war, that's all.

And that's enough. And again, that is indirectly spirit, those are indirectly spiritual movies. The recognition of madness is the first act of awakening out of the madness because the moment you recognize the madness whether it's in you or in the other or in the collective, the moment you recognize it, a new dimension of consciousness has arisen, awareness.

And that is part of the awakening. On a personal level, the dysfunction, there are quite a few movies that show dysfunction on a personal level, many. Now most of them never get beyond that.

It's the dysfunction, the conflict is somehow resolved but there's no growth or

realization. There's one movie that I like, it's called Changing Lanes. And it's about two people who have a slight car accident on the freeway.

Not just a slight accident, they're changing lanes and they bump into each other. And they talk to each other briefly but that relatively insignificant event through unconscious reactivity gets amplified over the successive days into extreme madness between these two drivers in the totally, it gets bigger and bigger and bigger. They try to kill each other and it's all started from relatively little and it shows the nature of reactivity and what it does without talking about it.

It's just occasionally in the movie, you see if you look carefully in the background, while they're being insane in the foreground, sometimes you see little hints at transcendence. For example, they're insane in the foreground doing what they do. And in the background, you see two Buddhist monk walking across the screen.

And in another film, you see in the background the Christian cross on the wall while they're doing totally insane just because all these are ways of transcendence that have possibilities. And in the end, they are able to go beyond their madness. And that is, so it's worth seeing.

It's not a film that became very famous. It's changing lanes, which of course has two meanings. It's the meaning of what originally caused the accident.

But changing lanes also means changing the normal, the lane is where the unconscious movement of your thinking and your life, changing that to consciousness. Now, you might have noticed that every movie that you see, if you got down to the very basis of it, is about some form of conflict. Because if you went to see a movie of, say, two people, they are happy together.

They get up in the morning, say, I love you. I love you too. What are we going to do this weekend?

Let's go to the country. Okay. Oh, wonderful.

Going for a hike. Everything is fine. Great job.

Nothing. And after 15, 20 minutes, you would say, I want my money back. There's nothing happening.

But if after 15 minutes, they're still happy, they're driving along, and suddenly there's a hitchhiker, a girl who has just been attacked. Can you help me? Ah, something is happening.

And of course it is. Then the protagonists are being confronted with challenges and problems. Their normal existence is disrupted.

And unless their normal existence is disrupted, change doesn't happen. So in good movies, you see that the disruption of normal life, which is initially, usually, by those who experience it, interpreted as negative, the disruption of normal life is ultimately that which brings about a shift in consciousness. In not good movies, all you experience is conflict, but there's absolutely, it's never transcended on an inner level, the conflict.

It might be resolved on an outer level. Finally, the criminal gets put away into jail. So you feel a little bit, ah, at least he got what he deserved.

But there's nothing, there's no change. But if the conflict that arises, disruption of normal life, results in a deepening, then it does not just happen to the characters on the screen. The viewer partakes, if only to a small degree, of the shift in consciousness that is happening to the characters on the screen by the act of identification.

That is the power of entertainment that it invites you to identify the suspension of disbelief. Most of you know that term because it comes from theater originally, I believe. It applies to films also.

Disbelief means everybody knows that these things are not actually happening. That's disbelief. But by watching, it draws you in to such an extent that you voluntarily suspend, you let go of knowing that this is not actually happening.

It is as if it were happening for you, especially if you identify with the character. And if the character that you're identified with goes through a transformation, then that can bring about you're not quite the same, not totally the same person after watching than you were before. There's been a small degree of participation in the shift that happened to the character.

And that's a great possibility in movies to bring that to humanity. And I'd like to just give you a few examples of films that I'm very fond of where that happens. But I have to look at my list for that.

Of course, one of my favorite films ever that most of you have probably seen is Groundhog Day. With Bill Murray. And for those who haven't seen it, I'll summarize in one minute what it is about.

It's a man who is very much trapped in a negative mindset. Everything is just complaints about everything and he hates everybody and whoever he is, he just dislikes it. Cynical and he's a weather man of a TV station.

He talks about he's a weather forecaster and he travels to a town to report on this Groundhog Day in wintertime. A town, of course, he hates that town. They have to stay there with his assistant for one night in a little hotel.

And then he finds himself trapped in that day. He wakes up every morning and it's still

the same day in the same town. And every time his alarm clock, his alarm bell rings in the morning, it starts with the same song on the radio.

I can't remember what it is. It's Cher singing something, the early Cher. I love you, babe or something.

And so he gets more and more... Everything happens is the same in the day. He meets the same people.

He can't get out of that day. He's trapped in time. He's trapped in that day and he is forced to re-experience.

It varies according to what he does, but the basic situation is the same day again and again. He tries all sorts of things. He can't get out of it.

And in the end, he gets so desperate, he even tries suicide. He drives off a cliff and then goes unconscious and suddenly wakes up and it's about seven o'clock in the morning again. So you can't get out until finally a shift happens inside him and he begins to surrender and accept the day and every moment of that day as it is.

And then he begins, because he accepts, he has begun, suddenly has empathy with other humans and suddenly he's helpful to other humans. And so the way in which he experiences this day changes suddenly because his inner attitude towards it changes. And every day, although it's still the same day, it becomes more and more beautiful.

And in the end, he says to his assistant and finally they even begin to love each other because he's become open. He says to his assistant, it's so lovely here, let's stay here. And the next day he finally is allowed to go and it's the next day.

So it's not until he surrenders that he experiences the beauty of that day and then he's released. Suicide is no solution. You have to come back.

If you're still in resistance and commit suicide, you come back again. It's a lovely movie. The essential message is very profound.

So I've seen that about five times. Also, I found some spiritual elements in The Last Samurai with Tom Cruise. Now, these are movies that have an archetypal element to them.

There are quite a few transformational movies and the archetypal part of those movies is that at first the protagonist is experiencing what in mythical language could be called the descent to the underworld or the night journey. In other words, chaos and total despair. So the protagonist has to descend into despair and chaos and from there he experiences a rebirth.

And in a way that happens to the character in The Last Samurai. He's totally, he

becomes an alcoholic. He's totally disenchanted with life.

Nothing has any value anymore for him. And then accidentally he's captured by the last remaining samurai warriors of Japan and he lives with them in a village. And in that village for the first time he's confronted also with stillness and their simple way of doing things.

And at first everything inside him is screaming and he doesn't know any Japanese but he does know because he's an alcoholic the first few days he constantly screams, sake, sake. He needs another drink but he's not getting it. And finally he comes out, he's being transformed by the stillness that they represent that community of samurai's and becomes part of them.

So it shows the transformation through stillness. Also a movie that has the courage of bringing in some stillness. It's very rare but it's there.

Which is of course very, very much signifies the transcendent dimension in you when you see it in a movie and you can tune into that. It's wonderful for those few that have some stillness, have the courage to have stillness. There was some, *The Horse Whisperer*, many years ago, the movie, it's like maybe 20 years old now, where the movie has the courage to show you long moments of stillness.

For example, when he's confronting the horse that's been traumatized in a huge field. The horse is at the other end of the field and the horse whisperer sits there, doesn't, just stays with the horse for a long time and you see the wind blowing across the field and then he goes a little bit closer to the horse and the horse comes a little closer and finally through the stillness, and of course the viewer participates in the stillness, finally the horse and the human come together and that's in itself also transformational to encounter stillness in a movie.

But let's come back for a moment to transformation through despair and so on. Another lovely film is *Painted Veil*. Some of these films, by the way, are based on very good books, but I'm, here we are talking about, of course, just the films.

The Painted Veil, of course, is based on a novel by Somerset Maugham and it's about a woman who is, who marries a man just for money and convenience, a woman who is very superficial, incapable of true love, betrays him early on in marriage and he, to punish her, takes her, he's a doctor, he takes her to a part of China where there's cholera and into hell basically for her and by being confronted with that deep suffering, she gradually undergoes a deepening in the movie. And she becomes capable of love through that. So in other words, the suffering erodes her egoic self and brings, shows you that there is, in what was before, seemed a very superficial person.

No person is truly superficial. They're just superficial when you, on the outer appearance.

If every human has that depth potentially, and in some humans, suffering is needed or the descent into the underworld or the night journey, it's needed to break the shell of the ego and suddenly there's depth and suddenly the capacity for love and compassion and empathy with other humans arises.

And so by watching that again, the viewer, to some extent, participates in that shift in consciousness. Another movie that I loved, not that well known perhaps, it's called The Game, and maybe 20, 25 years old, with Michael Douglas. And that is the role that Michael Douglas plays so well, he's played it a few times, of a person who is totally in their ego, big, wealthy, egoic self, controlling, totally incapable of any true human interaction.

So he's that wealthy character in the movie with a dreadful ego, huge ego. And his brother, who is dysfunctional in his view, hasn't succeeded in life, he gives him a little, for his birthday, a little ticket or something. This ticket gives you free access or something to participation in this game, that some organization has created a game which you can participate, but you just have to agree to it.

And he finally says, okay, I'll do it. And then this organization that creates the game for whoever chooses to participate and then create situations in your life to disrupt your existence. And these are gradually, in the movie, you can see how his totally secure but lifeless existence gradually gets more and more disrupted by things that happen.

Somebody he meets, things, strange events suddenly happen, and suddenly he doesn't know if it's a game anymore. It seems to be real. And then in the end, he believes he's lost all his money.

He's destitute somewhere in a village in Mexico, just totally lost everything. Anyway, I won't tell you the end, but except that there's, in the end, it doesn't say that he's become spiritually awakened, but in the end, there's a little hint in the last minute that he's actually now become human. So the ego was so massive, it had to be destroyed through extreme anguish, suffering, and dreadful loss of everything.

So it shows the mechanism, and sometimes suspension of disbelief is hard occasionally in that movie, in some situations, but nevertheless, it works. So that's called the game. Of course, the game is what we are all engaged in, the game of life.

Complaining about the challenges of life and the conflict that doesn't leave us alone in life, but wanting our money back if we go to a movie and there's no conflict happening. So there we enjoy it, but we complain when we get it in our own lives. Of course, that's the very essence.

That is what pushes you into awakening, and the transcendent is the challenges of life. And even when you awaken, life continues to present you with challenges, and that's the

beauty of it. So instead of saying, there's an absurd belief in many humans that life should be free of challenges, it should leave me alone.

Why can't life leave me alone? I want to, it doesn't. If it's not one thing, it's something else.

And that's good. That keeps you, once the awakening process has started in you, then challenges tend to bring about a deepening. You can also experience regression temporarily.

A challenge can come in and your ego can come back. The old reactive patterns can come back, and there you're trapped again, but not for too long. You'll get out again.

So the challenges become actually easier to manage when the awakening process has begun. They no longer turn into suffering. When the awakening process has not begun, the life challenges are turned into suffering, and that's the misery of ordinary existence.

One damn thing after another. God, I can't stand it anymore. I'm going to kill myself.

Well, before you kill yourself, why don't you try surrender? You have nothing to lose. And if surrender doesn't work, you can kill yourself.

A great movie, again, about transformation of somebody who is totally trapped in a miserable, conditioned sense of self. A movie, unfortunately, the title is not very inspiring. The movie's protagonist is Clint Eastwood, and the producer is Clint Eastwood, and probably the script writer is Clint Eastwood.

It's called Gran Torino. Gran Torino is a car. Well, anyway, the protagonist has this old car that he's very fond of called Gran Torino.

That's the title of the movie. But the protagonist is a former military man. He's now in his 70s, and very bitter and angry with everything and everybody.

And next door to him, Asian immigrants have moved in, what are these savages, what are they doing there? And leave me alone. But gradually, there's a teenage girl with these Asian immigrants who comes to him and talks to him occasionally, and he begins to open up a little bit to this teenage girl, and begins to experience a little bit of human affection, although he denies it to himself.

And he even goes over there to partake in their meal, and he still looks at everybody suspiciously. And he actually, when his son comes and wants to take him to old people's homes, I'm not going anywhere. And then, as he opens up a little through interaction with this teenage girl, and then the teenage girl gets attacked, raped, and attacked, and is buried by some gang.

And he has, or before, has protected her already from that gang occasionally, because

he's a military man, so these people, these thugs, they actually respect him, because when he goes there, his presence is very threatening, and of course, he has a gun in his hand. He doesn't say, make my day, but that's the attitude behind it. And he realizes also, he has to go to a doctor, that he's ill, he has some lung cancer or something.

And so, how are these, what can we, everybody expects that he's going to shoot these thugs now to revenge what they did to this girl, that he started to feel affection for. But finally, the last part of the film is he achieves self-transcendence. He goes to where these thugs live, pretends to have a gun, but of course, he's unarmed, and puts his hand under his jacket, and they shoot him, and then realize he's totally unarmed, and of course, there are lots of witnesses around, and they all get arrested.

So he has given his life in order to take these thugs away, to get them off the street. He offered his life as a final act of letting go of self. He offered it to her, and symbolically, he lies, when they shoot him, he lies on the ground like Jesus on the cross.

He just lies dead. So this is the beautiful thing to see the gradual, the shift in him from total negativity and egoic self to transcendence of self. It's a lovely movie, if you haven't seen it yet.

Mentioned briefly, A Beautiful Mind, movie that is based on a real person and real events, a scientist who has delusions. He sees people that are not there. They talk to him, but he doesn't know that they are very real to him.

He doesn't know that he's insane, and nor does the viewer until the first half of the film. Even the viewer participates in his insanity. That's a very clever thing to do in that film.

The viewer is part of his insanity because the viewer believes exactly what he believes, that all these people that talk to him and he talks to are real. And only somewhere in the middle of the film, it dawns on him and the viewer that these are delusions. So he suddenly becomes aware of what his own mind has created.

And so the awareness has arisen in him. And as the awareness has arisen in him, he is no longer at the mercy of his own mind. His own mind in this movie is externalized in the form of people that come to him and talk to him.

But in everybody, of course, you have your own mind that talks to you. Every normal person has that. And you have thought patterns that come again and again and talk to you.

So everybody really has that form of madness. This is not in the movie. I'm just adding a little bit.

But it's implied in the film. Everybody suffers, basically, from the madness that he experiences as an external event, external events. Everybody experiences the same

madness in themselves as inner events.

Everybody has, they have persistent thought patterns, bundles of thought and reactive patterns that continuously say this or say that or want you to do this, want you to talk to you. They talk. And of course, in the unconscious state, you are identified with what your mind is saying.

That corresponds in the film to believing in the absolute reality of these people who talk to him. And then this realization comes that is not ultimately real. That's not who I am.

Awareness arises. And once in this film, it's shown beautifully, once he knows that these people are not real, come to him, once or twice, he has to actually, when somebody comes to him, by the way, he gets the Nobel Prize for mathematics or economics, whatever it is, that's based on it. He actually, a true person lived.

When somebody in the film, somebody comes and finally tells him that you've been awarded the Nobel Prize, and he looks suspiciously because he doesn't know whether this person is real or it's an apparition that's just come to him. So he has to call a friend and say, is this person really here? Yes.

And the awareness that arises in him of what his mind has created, does not result immediately in a cessation of all these things that come to him. They still come, they still try to get him drawn in, but what he practices is not giving them attention. When they talk to him, he doesn't act on it.

He says, okay, I'm not interested. I'm not listening, not interested. So you don't, and again, that has an equivalent in what you can do in yourself.

And that is, you can recognize persistent thoughts that have a pull and not get involved. And they say, you must think about this. Okay, I'm not interested in this anymore.

Just take your attention to the present moment, just this. I'm not following you where you want to take me. And you don't need to, it's not a, it's simply, it's a gentle withdrawing of attention from where the thoughts want to take you rather than through some kind of almost violent act trying to keep out the thoughts that doesn't work to want to go away.

It's not, it's not resistance. It's simply choosing where you want to place your attention. I'm not going to follow you.

And so gradually then, for example, there's a girl that he always sees that's not real. And then for quite a while, he sees that girl always sitting in a corner somewhere, but she's almost given up talking to him. She's just occasionally, she's still there watching.

And finally, most of the time, he's then free. So that's the gradual shift. So that is, to me,

it not only shows you the story of insanity and going beyond, it applies really to everybody because everybody in the unawakened state is suffering from that same insanity.

A beautiful mind. The mind doesn't really become beautiful unless awareness arises. Because until then, it's not very beautiful.

Some films are lovely because they show you a character who has virtually no ego. And that is when you can, when you can watch a human being who is, who acts free of ego, it is liberating in itself to see a human being who is not burdened with the unconsciousness that we call ego. In normal life, I think I would say that the Dalai Lama is a good example.

His main teaching, as I see it, is not his words. His main teaching is his being. His teaching is just sitting there and looking at the audience and looking at you.

And then somebody asks a question and when I spent a little bit of time with him last year, I was surprised how often when people ask him a question, and sometimes the questions are very complex, almost like, how would you solve the problems of the world? Not quite like that, but almost like that. And often he just sits there and says, I don't know.

I don't know. And sometimes, of course, after a while, he does say something that is quite relevant and is helpful. But it starts with, there's also teaching in there, it starts with not knowing.

Not knowing is a very powerful place in you. And I recommend it. Go there.

You don't need to continuously interpret everything and everybody and every situation and every human being. What do you think of this person? I don't know.

He's a human being. Why do you need an opinion? Why do you need to immediately fix the other human, give them some structure?

This is how he or she is. You've created a prison not just for that other human being, but also for yourself. So a beautiful state of not knowing, but the ego really can't survive in the state of not knowing.

The ego needs to say, I know. Or if the ego is in the state of not knowing, it feels profoundly uncomfortable and then tries to compensate with some kind of delusion. So the Dalai Lama, just to watch him is so lovely to see somebody who is free of the burden of an egoic self.

That's the main teaching. And so occasionally in movies, now whether that happens accidentally in some cases or whether there's actually a relatively enlightened script

writer or director who creates that, I don't know. But there are movies that are not one or two that have no pretension of being spiritual in any way whatsoever.

And yet I discovered a protagonist suddenly and saying, well, he has no ego. So I'd like to recommend just a couple. One is, maybe it's a 25 year old movie or it's part of the, if I remember correctly, Indiana Jones series of adventure movies.

And this one is called The Jewel of the Nile. And apart from Indiana Jones, the protagonist in the movie is a Sufi holy man. And usually done in a very lighthearted way, but usually in movies, when you see a holy man, you have how the mind would project what a holy man looks like.

It would be kind of... But this holy man is a young man who is childlike and innocent and is full of humor and very light and doesn't take himself too seriously and has a wonderful quality of innocence to him. And later it turns out in the movie whose title is The Jewel of the Nile and the protagonist at first believe that what they're looking for is this incredible jewel.

And at some point in the movie, they realize the Jewel of the Nile is not a jewel at all. It's the title of this holy man. He is the Jewel of the Nile.

And there is an imposter who wants to take his place and wants to kill the Jewel of the Nile. And the imposter represents the egoic self to an enormous degree. And he almost succeeds, but of course he doesn't.

So in the end, the true Jewel of the Nile comes and is recognized by everybody in this big theater where there's... And the true Jewel of the Nile, suddenly there's a fire suddenly breaks out. But this innocent Jewel of the Nile, he just walks through the flames.

But there's nobody who claims credit I can walk through the flames. He just walks through the flames and then he's there and then he starts dancing. Just a lovely teaching there of an egoless being.

So how that got into Indiana Jones movie, I don't know, but it's there. Another film I saw where I said, well, this character has no ego is the, it's called The World's Fastest Indian. It's about an old man who has a, from New Zealand, played by Anthony Hopkins.

And he travels to the States to participate in some race with his motorbike. It's the Indian, Indian is refers to the motorbike that he has an old bike. So it's about his journey from New Zealand to the States and the people he meets and how he interacts.

And in every interaction, he displays no ego. He's immediate. He's just a presence there, no reaction.

Everybody's immediately accepted. Just wonderful to watch. Again, I don't know whether

this is accidental creation.

There's some higher consciousness that sometimes guides a script writer into creating a character that is free of ego or whether the script writer consciously knows that he's creating a character that's free of ego. I don't know, but it doesn't really matter. It's a teaching to watch a character free of ego.

It doesn't happen very often. The same, of course, in daily life. You don't often meet people that are free of ego, but awakening humans are no longer totally dominated by ego.

So the transcendent dimension is in you. There are, of course, movies that show people who are at a pre-egoic stage. And that in itself, it can be beautiful, too.

That's not your destiny to go there. But it is beautiful to see how anybody who is free of ego is so tuned into the totality of life that he or she in their daily life are supported by events that happen to them because they are tuned into the totality. And the totality, not only are they helpful to other humans and situations, but also life is helpful to them.

In the absence of ego, you are a blessing to the world. And so we have that. There are particularly two films that show protagonists who are at a pre-egoic stage.

So pre-egoic means the mind-made self, the me, the image that you have of yourself and through which you live that consists of thought activity and reactive patterns has not yet arisen. These are very simple humans. They're at a somewhat childlike state.

And so in mythology, often described, it's a mythological figure too, often described as the fool. There's also in the tarot cards, there's a card of the fool. Now the fool is at a pre-egoic stage.

The ego has not yet developed in him. He's childlike. He or she is childlike.

But because there's an absence of ego, he is just an expression, an unobstructed expression of the totality of life that can act through him. And it cannot act through a more evolved human who has a big ego. So it is often the fool in mythology is the only one who can do certain important tasks that the intelligent people and the evolved people who have big egos cannot do.

They cannot be used as an instrument by the greater consciousness. You want to call the underlying intelligence of life. They cannot be used fully as an instrument as the fool can.

And of course, the fool is the pre-egoic state of consciousness. And then comes the enlightened or awakened state, which means you have gone through ego and have awakened out of ego. Then again, you are connected with the totality and the greater

consciousness can use you again in a different way, different from the fool.

To an unenlightened outside observer, he might not even be able to tell the difference between you and the fool once you're awakened. There are certain similarities from an external viewpoint between the fool and the enlightened person. So they're sometimes mistaken.

Sometimes the fool is taken to be enlightened, and sometimes the enlightened is taken to be a fool. And a great example in a film of the fool being mistaken for somebody who is enlightened is the wonderful film with Peter Sellers, *Being There*. *Being There* is about this man who has been some rich person's butler for most of his life and never really left the house.

And finally, this rich person dies. And so he's left suddenly completely alone, cannot function in the world. Virtually, he's illiterate.

He's so childlike, he has no ego. And all he has is the clothes that his master used to wear. They fit him perfectly.

So he wears the expensive suits. And then some of the executors of the will come and say, well, you have to leave now. This house is going to be sold.

So he has a little suitcase, and he walks out into the street, doesn't know where to go, but dressed in this expensive business suit and encounters people just completely. And so what's life? How is life?

And suddenly, he gets hit by a car and not greatly injured, but just a little bit. And the car is a big limo driven by a chauffeur. And in that limo is this incredibly wealthy woman.

Charlene McLane is the actress. She invites him in, takes him to her house, he meets her husband. And because his utterances are so short, what he says, they are mistaken for deeply profound utterances.

He usually talks in terms of, because he's a gardener. He did a lot of gardening in his old place. So he says, I'm the gardener.

Oh, Mr. Gardener. And then the husband asks him about the economy, world economy. Well, in the springtime, when the buds open, all will be well, or something.

Oh, wow. And so, and then he meets the president of the United States, comes for a visit to this house. And he loves what he hears too.

And so on, towards the end, they're talking about that he might be the next president. And nobody realizes that he's a fool. They're taking to be highly evolved, enlightened, and have a great sense of humor.

But it's not a sense of humor. He just makes, they go into an elevator. And he's never experienced an elevator before in this house.

And so he says, oh, this is a very small room. And everyone goes, great. So the pre, and he is supported by life from the moment he has that accident, he's been taken care of.

And that's a bloodleth. And of course, we have a similar theme in Forrest Gump, who also exists at a pre-egoic stage. And he, again, is a beneficial influence.

He does, he helps many humans. He is a hero in the Vietnam War. He saves lots of people.

He claims no credit because he doesn't have an ego. He just says what he did. And then I did that.

But there's not, I did that. No. And then I did that.

So there's no identification with what he did. The egoic image has not arisen in him. So nobody is claiming credit for anything.

He is very, he is illiterate. He's, he's so unintelligent in conventional terms that he's almost unable to function. And yet, miraculously, he does great things.

And even the people he comes into that are close to him, who are tragic figures for most of the film, the person, his commanding officer, whom he saves in the Vietnam War, he loses both his legs. He's totally unhappy and miserable. The girl he loves, of course, the girl doesn't really want him because he knows, she knows that he's just too simple.

They cannot live together. She becomes very unhappy. She becomes a hippie, and drugs, and so on.

Tragic figures, who in the end all find redemption in the movie. They all find some degree of surrender, perhaps by being in close proximity to this non-egoic being, who again is so tuned in that life acts through him. It's wonderful to see that, of course, just as how a non-egoic entity functions.

But this is not, of course, where we can go. You cannot go back to the pre-egoic stage because we've all reached the egoic stage. There's no going back.

You're not going to become Forrest Gump. That's not what we are doing here. Ours is to transcend the egoic stage.

But to recognize the non-egoic stage is wonderful in its early form, pre-ego, because it has quite a few similarities with the post-egoic state that is arising in you. Something powerful that is in your life that you, of course, can experience easily all the time is the fact of the impermanence of all forms, that nothing lasts. If you've lived for long enough,

you begin to notice that people in your circle of acquaintances and friends begin to die.

And so you become aware of impermanence, also the experience loss, and that the impermanence is a very powerful realization for humans when it is not resisted. When you can be with somebody who died or be with some great loss and accept it for what it is, any experience of impermanence can be an opening into the transcendent dimension in you. If it's resisted, it's suffering.

If it's not resisted, it is recognized as the inevitable fact of sense-perceived existence that nothing lasts for long. Nothing that you have lasts for that long. Everything is destined to dissolve, and that's fine.

If a film can show you to some degree the fact of impermanence, then that film can also be an access point into the transcendent dimension. One film that I like very much that has that is called *The Notebook*, and it's about a woman who is suffering from Alzheimer disease, and her husband, who is trying to come be with her although it's painful. She doesn't know anymore who he is, and he's reading to her from some story from a notebook.

The story is about a young couple who are meeting and falling in love, and then the film shows you it shifts between the old man and the woman with Alzheimer and the young couple who are in love. And later in the film, you realize they are the same people, and she wrote this notebook because she realized in the early stages of Alzheimer's she was going to lose her memory, and so she wrote down the things that he reads to her. You see the continuous shift between the two time periods.

You see them as young people, and you see them as old people close to death, and especially her, and that shift gives you a very strong sense of impermanence, and that is watching that, then is quite a spiritual experience to just to watch that the young people, the old people, they're the same. So the passing of time, something arises in you when you don't resist impermanence that is very still and very present. It's almost satisfying to watch what before was unpleasant to watch, the fact of impermanence.

Once you don't resist it, it's actually quite satisfying to see how life forms continuously dissolve. The forms are not here to last, and as you acknowledge the fleetingness of all forms, something in you that is not part of the fleetingness of all forms arises more strongly. And what is that?

You could say it's consciousness itself, the formless in you, because it's only from there that you can be aware of the fleetingness of all forms. So even in a blockbuster film like *Titanic*, there is a spiritual dimension because it shows you the decaying wreck of the ship, the bottom of the sea, several times in the movie, at the beginning, at the end, in the middle, there are flashbacks, you see the life on the boat, and then suddenly it shows you again the image of the decaying wreck of the ship, the bottom of the sea. And

the shift back and forth gives you a strong sense of almost dreamlike quality of what's happening on the boat, and that's already all gone.

Of course, everybody knows even before you watch that what's going to happen, and nevertheless, the film will capture your attention. And so it has that dimension, also the woman, who is a young girl on the boat and a very old woman in the present time. The actress, by the way, I read just died a few weeks ago, who played the old woman.

Whenever you see in a film the shift between the same character as a young person and the same character as an old person, it's quite, it's a deepening. I often experience that, by the way, when I look at a human being, I often see, when I look at an old person, I see almost like a flashback the same person as a young boy or girl or young woman or man. And sometimes when I look at a young woman or man, I can also see that person already being old.

It's this, because it's only a few years in between this and that, just a few years. And after that, gone. One of the most spiritual, it's not a movie, it's not a film.

It's a commercial, the most spiritual commercial ever made. It's for beer. I can't remember what beer, it's some Scandinavian beer.

And it shows you, it lasts about 40 seconds. The commercial. And it begins with, it's a kind of, I don't know if it's a cartoon or, but it looks almost like a real being, human being.

And you see a baby coming out of the womb of a woman shooting out of the womb, a little baby. And it shoots up into the sky. And as it travels upward into the sky, it already begins to grow into a fully grown human as it goes within a few seconds, it goes up higher and higher.

And when it reaches the highest point, it's a man in his prime. And then it starts to go down. And as it starts to go down, it's kind of screaming.

And as it approaches the ground, it's already become old, an old man. And finally it goes plop into the ground, the grave. That's the end.

Suddenly the scream comes to an end. And it all took 30 seconds or 40 seconds, growing maturity, getting old. And then it tells you, of course, it's a commercial for beer.

So it says, life is short, drink. Now, I think without knowing it, they created a deeply spiritual commercial. Or perhaps they were guided by some higher force, the advertising people.

These friends of ours loved it so much, so they forwarded it on the computer, so we were able to watch it. Maybe we should put it on the website. And then, of course, there are

films that bring in, in some degree, a sense of presence or witnessing presence.

There's one film, and this is a film, one of the few films that are actually not boring, although some people would say this film is boring. I've said it to me, but I don't see it as boring. A film that has virtually no conflict in it.

This film's called *Lost in Translation*. And you wouldn't really, at first, see it as what's spiritual about that. It's about an actor.

Again, we have Bill Murray, a little older now. He travels to Japan. He plays a famous actor, although he is a famous actor.

It's also his character. He travels to Japan to do a commercial in Japan for brandy. And he spends a few days there, and he's in the hotel, and he meets a young girl.

What's spiritual about it is that this young girl, she has no particular function in the film as such. She's there because her boyfriend has to do a photo shoot. She's in the same hotel as the old actor, and they spend time together more and more time.

And the girl is just a... She walks around the city just watching things. She's a witnessing presence in the movie, not an active presence.

She's just there, just walking around, looking at things, watching. She travels to Kyoto on a train for a few hours, watching pines, Japanese life unfolding, watching. So this film has a character who represents a witnessing presence rather than a participant, not so much participating in or initiating some action, but just being a witnessing presence.

And I recommend that to any budding or non-budding film producers here to explore that a little bit more or script writers. Great potential there for bringing in the witnessing faculty into a film. We have it in some other films in one degree or greater or lesser degree.

We have it in *American Beauty* where the witnessing consciousness is represented by this young man who walks around with a movie camera. And just, he watches the world through, he films everything, his neighbors, whatever he was. He just, the highlight of the film is when he films a crumpled up piece of paper or plastic bag being tossed about in the wind.

And you see then what he films becomes the image on the screen. And you see in the background commentary says something beautiful about that. As he witnesses that, he sees incredible beauty even in that.

The beauty of every moment, just incredible. And at that moment, the viewer of the film experiences what he talks about. By watching this piece of paper or plastic being tossed about in the wind, it's a dance.

Something that everybody would overlook because usually in a film, what you're interested in is what happens. But here what happens is interrupted frequently. And what you are presented with simply is the fact of witnessing, of pure observation of life.

And if a movie can show you something that usually would be overlooked and see the beauty that is there in every moment and in everything, even the most insignificant things, certainly nobody would look for beauty in a piece of paper being tossed about in the wind. And yet there it is. And the moment you see it, you see it's a dance of form.

There too. And that awakens you to the beauty that is in every little thing in life. So that's a wonderful thing that a film can do.

It can point to that to make you more conscious of the aliveness and the depth that is in everything and especially in the things that usually you would overlook because there's something more important. So there's very strongly the transcendent dimension because although this film has, of course, and the action evolves, but it takes you out of the plot and suddenly presents you with something that has nothing to do with the plot at all. And yet it deepens, it gives a depth that wasn't there before.

And that is the transcendent dimension. And therefore, of course, that is what you need to do in your daily life and probably are already doing. Of course, you're always going somewhere to do something.

Whenever you're going somewhere, I'm going now there to do this, to meet that person, to do that. You're always on your way somewhere, but are you so involved in where you want to get to that you miss all the stuff on the way that is all around you? The beauty that is always all around you?

Or are you able to, even as you go about your daily business, are you able to acknowledge a moment of looking at the sky, there's clouds moving across the sky, being aware of the raindrops falling, especially later today, tonight, it's coming. The raindrops falling, there's a beauty there in everything. How light is reflected off of surface or in a glass of water, just aliveness and beauty, the aliveness of life all around you.

It's overlooked. 99% of that is completely overlooked because I have more important things to do. And what's important?

It's the future moment that I need to get to. That's more important. Not this, I'm getting, I'm on my way there.

I can't be here. I can't be where I am because I must be there. Normal human existence.

And of course, you never get there because there always remains there. There cannot become here because it is already here. The there is a mental creation.

So you're pursuing the mental creation of there which is the future moment, the future, which is a thought, nothing else. I need to get there. When you get there, of course, it's here again.

And again, you're not here. It's always the transcendent dimension then comes when you acknowledge the here. In addition, yes, of course, you deal with where you need to get to, but you more and more, you acknowledge the here and that deepens life.

That is the dimension of depths. And it's only then that aliveness comes in and you can appreciate the beauty of it all. Not necessarily the conventional beauty where you, the rare things, you would say, oh, that's really a beautiful flower.

Yes, it is. But it's as the, how the little tiny bubbles that are forming in this glass air bubbles are beautiful. They reflect the light like little diamonds.

How the light is reflected off the surface of this table, the air you're breathing, the light, everything is, has an aliveness to it. It can be, you can acknowledge it, the texture of something. And then when you go outside, the continuous arising, coming and going of life forms, it's a dance of life.

And that is not personal. It's not, so you transcend the merely personal when you acknowledge that dimension through presence. So presence is required to acknowledge the here fully.

So if a film can help you do that, then it has fulfilled a wonderful function. There's a Peaceful Warrior, a film that the critics didn't like, but don't always listen to the critics. I've seen some really bad films that were highly praised and vice versa.

Peaceful Warrior, which of course is based on the book. It's about a young man learning what it means to be present. And it's wonderful because it shows you there are no insignificant moments.

That's one of the important lines in that film. There are no insignificant moments. Every moment has a beauty and an intense aliveness to it.

And the teacher in the movie shows the young man what that means. And then the camera shows you the aliveness of what before was regarded as insignificant of every moment, intense aliveness of that. So again, it gives you an experience of presence.

But it only becomes meaningful if there's already some presence in you so you recognize it when you see it. If you are totally in your mind, then it's meaningless. If you're totally in your thinking, it's meaningless.

And of course, that's probably what the critics are. That's where they are. Well, not all, but some, most.

The Legend of Bagger Vance, another film I would recommend. It's about a man who is a golf professional. He has to go to war.

And when he comes back, he loses the ability to play golf. Then he meets this bagger that he's golfing. I think that's a term, golf term.

His assistant, a young black guy who really is a spiritual teacher. And he teaches him how to play golf again, but in a deeper sense, what it means to be present with playing. And that's the main part of the film is the second part when he learns what it is to be present.

And there's some wonderful shots of he going into absolute presence before he hits the ball. Absolute, no thought. One of the things his bagger assistant tells him, what you're learning is to be, ah, to stop thinking without falling asleep.

Stop thinking without falling asleep, which really is the essence of presence. And so as you watch that, when he has those moments, the viewer is invited to experience that state of consciousness. Stop thinking without going to sleep.

And he lifts up his club and goes, and he looks where he already sees the ball where it's going to be in the present. He looks and then he goes, wow. So I'd like to see that a bit more in films to bring in actual moments of presence where the character is experiencing presence and the viewer by viewing is entering the state of presence.

There was another film. This is a German film, goes back quite a few years. Wings of Desire, later remade in Hollywood as City of Angels.

And the original one is probably a little better. The second one has a lot of strong romantic element to it, which detracts a little bit from the witnessing presence. There are these angels walking around the city, watching what humans do and listening to their minds also.

And they are pure witnessing presences. In the original one, it's in Berlin. So these angels, nobody can see them.

They're just what they look like, just humans. And they walk around as pure presences, just watching. And they're amazed by human experiences and what they do.

And they're amazed by sensory perceptions that humans experience. And they're amazed at all the things that humans are no longer amazed by because it's familiar. But when you see the familiar through the eyes of pure presence, the familiar is no longer familiar.

And suddenly it's alive and new, and this presence arises. So there's great potential there for scriptwriters and directors of truly transformational films that embody

presence. And take the viewer into presence.

It's exciting. It's wonderful. So I hope you enjoy some of these.

If you haven't seen them, you've had some, and perhaps you will have some ideas of your own for perhaps a script that wants to be written, an idea, or if you don't want to write a script, write in, let us know what your idea is. If you think you are not up to it, somebody else wants to do it. I've had a few ideas of my own, and some people want me to write a script for a movie in LA, but it hasn't happened yet.

Whether it'll happen, I don't know. I don't think I would be very good at writing an actual script, but I could perhaps work with somebody, and we'll see. These things happen in their own time, and it doesn't really matter through whom it comes.

Consciousness chooses the most appropriate channels, but the most appropriate channels are not always the most obvious channels. Sometimes what looks like a non-appropriate channel becomes the most appropriate channel, so maybe I will write a script. So let's always focus on what's good, the arising of the consciousness, rather than focus on the old consciousness that's still playing itself out to a large extent in the media and entertainment.

We know all that. So rather than complain about that, let's focus on where it is arising, because what you focus on then grows. You give it attention.

Be careful with the media, because the media gives a lot of attention to negativity, so I recommend that you consume it in small, very small doses, and when you do consume it, be the witnessing consciousness. Don't believe what they're saying. This is very bad, very bad.

The banks are collapsing, very bad. How do you know that's bad? Well, let's not go into that.

Thank you. Welcome to our live Easter meditation. You're here not because you want to awaken, but because you are awakening unless somebody dragged you here or wherever you are, wherever you're here is.

If our meditations are deeply enjoyable, then you are awakening. So this is all part of the awakening, the collective awakening process. It goes far beyond the personal.

In fact, that which is transcended in the awakening process is the personal dimension. Transcended does not mean it gets totally eliminated, but you go beyond it. It no longer dominates your consciousness, and in a manner of speaking, you die to the personal dimension, and for some of you or many of you, most of you, it's a gradual dying process, and for a few, it's a drastic and sudden death.

For most, as I said, it's a gradual dying of being centered in a personalized sense of identity. And that dying of the personal self of which our being together here is a part, that's the Good Friday message, the truth contained within that, that the death, as I see it, the death of Jesus happens on Friday, and the birth of Christ, the resurrection, the rebirth into a different dimension happens at Easter. And until the death of the personal sense of self is voluntarily embraced, it's painful.

But what's even more painful is to be trapped in that narrow sense of self. What is that narrow sense of self? Consciousness is identified with form.

Another way of putting it, consciousness is trapped in form, doesn't know it, dreamlike state. Whenever you get upset about trivial things, what he did or he said or she did or she said or your parents or your spouse or your ex-spouse or money matters and you get upset and reactive, that's a good indication that consciousness is trapped in form. And then form becomes all important, which is a delusion.

So you are trapped. Another way of putting it, you don't know who you are. Another way of putting it, you are nailed to the cross of matter.

You are nailed, you, consciousness, are nailed to the cross of form. And you suffer. Eventually, you surrender.

In other words, the reactive entity does not operate anymore and then you're free, the awakening to who you are beyond form. The words I'm speaking here are, of course, thought forms. But there is the unseen dimension to our being together here that has nothing to do with thought or sense perceptions, but is the awareness that is arising of consciousness itself, the formless dimension in you, one could say.

The words which are forms, thought forms, continuously point to that, that to which they point is, of course, beyond words, beyond form, is who you are essentially. And you recognize it as we sit together here, that there is something here that is not the words, not what you see, not the image of this person, the form, but something arises from within you that you cannot name, although I occasionally try to find a little word for it, inner space, stillness, awareness itself arises. That's where the personal is transcended.

Of course, this is helpful to be here together and enter that dimension or allow that dimension to arise in which the personal is transcended. The real challenge is in everyday life, which for many people seems to consist of nothing but the personal and all the personal concerns. And some of you who are able to be here or sometimes when you're not disturbed or you go out into nature or sit quietly in a room, you can become still, alert, present, transcend the personal.

And some of you, yes, you're able to, it's beautiful, the awakening is happening. And some of you are not yet, not able yet to sustain it. The moment a challenge comes from

the world of the personal, the phone rings.

Are you able, when you answer the phone and talk to whoever, your accountant, be there as the person who deals with whatever needs to be dealt with, but also not lose awareness of spaciousness? That's the real, your purpose for being here, not just for being here, now on this planet here, is to master that art of being rooted in the impersonal and still dealing with the world of form, the world of matter, the world of thoughts. Ultimately, more effectively than before, because one of the great benefits of mastering this art of this dancing, the dance between form and formlessness, one of the most wonderful benefits is you lose your fear of form, the world, other people.

In other words, you lose fear. And fear is that which blocks love, which would naturally be there in the absence of fear. Fear ultimately is saying, form is all there is.

Now, a belief that there is something beyond form doesn't help you. A belief, I believe in God, I believe in the spiritual dimension, that doesn't help you, because a belief is still a thought form, so you still have fear. It needs to be an actual realization, not an understanding thing as, ah, now I understand.

No, it's not that kind of realization. A knowing, non-conceptual knowing, a living knowing of that in you that is formless, that is still, present, alert, spacious. You have to bring that into this world, into the world of madness, madness meaning the complete absence of transcendence.

Otherwise, the world makes you mad. And whenever you go back into the world, you become mad again, like everybody else. So you can bring sanity to the world, or you can allow the world to make you mad.

Draw you into its madness. Whenever you're fighting something or someone, the world is drawing you into its madness. Of course, somebody 2,000 years ago already said that, forgive your enemies, is basically the same thing, saying the same thing.

Don't fight anything or anybody. Fighting is an inner state of consciousness, a reactive state of consciousness. Any reactivity is a form of fighting.

So you have all the fights in the world that are not working because they are fights, the fight against terrorism, the fight against drugs, the fight against crime, the fight against poverty, the fight against illness. So these are not solutions, they add to the problems. The solutions, that's not really solutions, there is one solution to all the problems, which is, find the transcendent dimension in you.

And it's not a question of saying, okay, I found it now, what's next? By finding, it means to continuously live that knowing. It's not a once, okay, I found it now, I'm awakened.

It's a continuous knowing in the background of your life, non-conceptual awareness.

Stays with you, that's what it is. Shines through the personal.

And then through that, the light that shines through the person that was before was so heavy and dense, that is what transcendence means. The density of the person or the personality, once you know what it is, you can see it in others around you in daily life, you can see how they are trapped completely in their conditioned sense of self, which is the, that is the density of the personality, the person. Your challenge is, the question is, does that make you dense?

Do you react to their density and by doing so become just as dense and reactive as they are? Or are you able to be there as the bringer of transcendence? Other terminology, for example, A Course in Miracles uses other terminology, the bringer of salvation.

There's a statement in A Course in Miracles that says, I'm here for the salvation of the world, and that's what it means. You have to bring in the transcendence into this world. And it's not just, you don't, it's something that happens in the collective consciousness.

And quite often, as you bring that dimension into this world, it can awaken others to that, even sometimes a dense, very dense personality. Suddenly, let's go, suddenly the dense personality, let's go off his or her defenses, because you are not opposing it, reacting against it. And then something can happen.

A sudden awakening, recognition, just a glimpse perhaps. It's enough for the awakening process, which that person may have no idea that that's what it is, but just, but it is enough for the awakening process to begin, the spark. So really, if you know that in any life situation, your true purpose, no matter what situation you encounter in your life, your true purpose in that situation, your deeper purpose in that situation is not the dealing with the external factors of the situation.

Yes, you have to do that also. But your true purpose is to embody the transcendent or awakened state of consciousness, to bring awareness, in other words, to embody awareness. If you forget that, as I said before, you become mad again, like the world.

You have to remember, you're here to embody awareness. And that's the true purpose in any situation. And then you deal with the externals, and you deal with them differently, of course, not in a mad way.

And you don't generate more madness out in the world. If necessary, put little stickers everywhere in your home to remind you until you don't need them anymore. Put a little sticker on your cell phone, T for transcendence, so that you don't become unconscious on your cell phone.

Put it on your computer screen. Bathroom mirror in your car. So another lovely lesson in the Course in Miracles is called, let me remember what my purpose is.

Ah, yes. Of course, remembering is not enough. And then what follows on from remembering is living it.

Oh, yes, this is my purpose. Let me remember what my purpose is here. Your purpose is to dissolve the madness by embodying awareness.

Your purpose is not fighting the madness, reacting, complaining about it. That's not your purpose. So our Easter message is, of course, remembering our true purpose, and not just remembering and then forgetting, remembering and then living it.

And then perhaps you forget, and then remember and again live it. Live it. Embody it.

Embody it. So that means whoever you meet in daily life, whether it's a casual meeting, or you meet somebody, a colleague at work, whatever, whoever, it's a holy encounter, potentially, if you remember your purpose. Because you bring the spiritual dimension into the interaction.

Or rather, it shines through you. Of course, it ultimately is you. Words are always limited.

Are we able to control our minds while sleeping? Although I'm able to be present much of my waking hours, from the minute I fall asleep to the minute I wake up, my mind is chattering away. I assume the questioner is talking about his or her dream life.

From the minute I wake up to the minute I wake, I fall asleep to the minute I wake up, my mind is chattering away. Well, it won't be chattering away during dreamless sleep. Every yeoman, as you know, has periods of dreamless sleep, and there's no mind activity there where the mind connects with the Source.

But you don't know that. And then, I assume, then you mean that you have a very active dream life. There's not much you can do except go into sleep with as much presence as you can.

So in the last 15 minutes before sleep at least, don't engage in mind activity, television, no, listening to the radio, no, even reading a book, no. Go into the body directly, or use any other access point for presence, or just go into presence directly. And go into sleep from presence.

Don't confuse, this may not be the case with you, but it could be the case with some people, don't confuse suppressing thought with being present. It is, for some people, able to suppress thought, which requires an effort, and you become a little contracted when you do that. So in other words, some people can will themselves to stop thinking, but it's not real presence.

You can't really will yourself into presence. It's not will, there's no contraction that goes with it, and it's not really, not even an effort. So let me just demonstrate, because words

sometimes are not sufficient.

If you will yourself to stop thinking, the body contracts a bit and you're holding something in, and you go like this, and you might even stop breathing for periods of time. So, and if you hold yourself tight and you stop breathing for periods of time, you may be able to stop thinking while you do that. Some people call that meditation, and some people have perfected it to such a degree that they can sit for one or two hours like that, and that holds thought at bay, and then the moment you let go, come out of your meditation, the mind is more active than before, because you were holding the lid on a boiling kettle.

You're holding the lid down. But real presence is simply a natural arising of awareness, in which there's no contraction in the body, and there's no willpower that is exerted, but presence is simply allowed to arise like this, and that's a state of openness. In that state, thoughts tend to quickly dissolve.

Very different from the state of closeness, the tight lid, to that. So, make sure that presence is not brought about by an act of will, willpower, exertion of willpower, because that's not, that's not presence. Presence is powerful, but soft, gentle, open.

Some people have an active dream life, other people less so. Of course, everybody dreams more or less. Some people remember their dreams, others never remember, they almost never remember.

The more attention you give to your dreams after you wake up, the more you tend to dream, and there may be something said for some time, there may be a period in a person's life where paying attention to your dreams can be helpful, such as it's practiced in Jungian therapy and so on. There may be periods in your life when paying attention to your dreams, you can learn certain things, there may be messages there, and the more attention you give to your dreams, the more the dream life responds. But I believe that that is, that is a period in a person's life, and then you move on, and then dream life becomes of less importance, or maybe still occasionally you might get a very insightful dream.

The important practice is presence in daily life, then eventually the rest will look after itself, and dreams tend to turn more peaceful also, and you might even lessen the amount of dreams that you have, not that that matters really anymore. Dreams are less needed to give you important insights when you are present, because in presence insights tend to come to you directly, so you tend to less need the intermediary of dream images less, because you're already connected with the source of all insights and wisdom. Funny thing is, if you go to a Jungian analyst, after a while you begin to have Jungian dreams, isn't that strange?

Not that that's not, that's not valid or valuable, that's how it works, because life responds

to your, or consciousness responds to your expectations. Well, I trust that you can hear me, and also that nobody is waiting for something to happen. As you know, the normal state of consciousness is a waiting state, it's a waiting room.

Normal human existence is a waiting room for life to get better, occasionally it does, and then after a while you're back in the waiting room, and so life is missed, the aliveness of life is missed, because you're waiting for it, while it's happening. A sorry state, a little amusing too, well you can cry or laugh depending on your perspective on it. And so of course we have this, I think it may be a Zen saying that says, this is it, where's my life?

Or expressions like, I don't have a life, or you might tell somebody, get a life. One or two people may want to ask a question, unless the question is already gone, let's see what the first question is. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (7:52:57 - 7:53:14)

A friend of mine got shot and died a couple days ago, so it's been on my mind, what happens at the time of death, and where does the life force go, what is the transformation?

[Speaker 1] (7:53:18 - 8:20:28)

Thank you, thank you. Well, I haven't gone through physical death yet, as the Zen master who was asked about life after death said, I don't know, and they said, why don't you know, you're the master, and he said, yeah, but I'm not a dead master. But I've gone very deeply to what one could call death to identification with form, so in a way I have gone into that realm from where I can say and know that ultimately what we see as death is the dissolution of form, that the eternal in us, which I know that firsthand, cannot be touched by that.

So what exactly happens, I would say depends on whatever state of consciousness you were in, that must be a predominant state of consciousness in this lifetime. If in this lifetime you were continuously identified with form, your body, or the psychological form of me, that means consciousness, this expression of consciousness was still in a somewhat dreamlike state, which is identification with form, and you can easily extrapolate from that if the tendency of consciousness to identify with form was still there, which in other ways the awakening had not happened, this tendency will continue, there will be further identification with form, and the process will continue as the consciousness that is not yet fully awake will continue to identify with form again, and then gradually come to a place where awakening happens.

Or if there has already been a disidentification from form in this lifetime, then you can extrapolate from there that the compulsive urge to identify with form and to seek another form, or another cycle of form identification, this compulsion to seek further

experiences through identifying with form, then would either be much weaker or be completely absent, in which case the consciousness that you are is no longer bound to this realm and will not seek to re-experience the realm of form.

But in either case, I can tell you that all is well. It does not really matter whether this person now needs further experiences of identification, in which case this will happen, or whether he's already free of this urge, in which case he will move on and live in a realm that we can't even conceive of from where we are here. I get a sense deep within in the forms of what that is, but we don't need to talk about it here.

All we know is nothing, this is the beginning of A Course in Miracles, which is the entire Course in Miracles summarized in two lines, nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists, herein lies the peace of God. That which is real in him is beyond form. Anybody can know that when you see a dead body, you realize that this is no longer whom you knew, this is not the being that you knew, this is only a shell.

So nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal ultimately exists. This is why sages from all traditions speak of this realm of form as ultimately illusory, ultimately, it depends what level you look at. The important thing is all is well, beyond the appearance on the level of form, which is the only level where death exists, it is the transition from one form into another form or from one form into formlessness.

That is what death is, no more than that, nothing real dies, nothing real dies, which is to say ultimately there is no such thing as death, there only seems to be. It's a transmutation of form, either form dissolves or seeks some other form, some other identification with form. That for you, of course, to go into stillness in the face of death, to go into stillness is important, to become still within yourself, especially when you are sitting with somebody who is going through the death process, or you are confronted with somebody who has just died next to you, to be with that, immediately close your eyes, go into the deep stillness where you realize who you are.

And once you realize who you are, which is formless consciousness, then you realize also that nothing real died, nothing real died, which is to say ultimately there is no death. It does not mean that you can't feel sad. You can allow yourself to feel tears and to feel sad, and at the same time realize that nothing real died.

That happened to me when my parents died two years ago within the space of six months, both of them, so to be confronted with the death of a loved one in a short period of time. Yes, there were tears, and there was sadness, and at the same time there was the realization that ultimately there is no death, and who they were in their essence has not been destroyed. Just as I know that I in my essence cannot be destroyed.

And so that comes from that. It comes from self-realization or self-knowledge, the realization that the other also is beyond death. So you can have the coexistence of, yes,

on this level there is a place for sadness and mourning and tears.

If it happens, it comes in waves. You may have noticed usually if somebody close to you dies, the sadness comes in waves at you. Then you cry, and then it leaves you, and then comes another wave.

And even when the wave comes, there can be an undercurrent of peace. So you're not totally in that emotion. You're not totally consumed by it.

It exists there in your own spaciousness. And the spaciousness underneath the emotion is the peace. And it's only from that inner peace that you can realize the truth behind death.

From Leanne, most spiritual teachers talk about the process of enlightenment or awakening, explaining things as if we are moving towards a goal somewhere in the future. How do you bridge learning the process of living in the now without continuing to feed the idea of it being a goal somewhere in the future? So we talk about learning to live in the now, which implies time, which is not the now.

That's what the question is about, the process of awakening. And does this not lead to the idea that we are moving towards a goal in the future and thereby, of course, missing the now? That could be the case if it's misunderstood.

If the process of awakening or living in the now is misunderstood, then the mind will create an imagined future self that is fully at home in the now. So one day, the mind says, I will achieve the state of being fully in the now, and then I'll be awake. And of course, thereby ensuring that you will never reach it.

And this is a dilemma of many spiritual seekers who have been seeking for many, many years. Nobody present, of course, here. They've been seeking for many, many years and not realizing that their mind has created a state to be achieved in the future.

And I am aspiring towards that state. And that state is a perfected, more enlightened or awake form of me. And so, of course, you will never reach it because continuously you have the idea in your mind that there is a state to be reached.

And so you miss continuously the only place where the state can be reached, which is now. So that's the realization then that we need to let go of this idea that awakening is a future state to be achieved. But awakening can only happen in the present moment.

And there's no self that you're going to reach that is a perfected version of your present self. But whenever we talk about this, the timeless dimension of consciousness, of presence, with reference to this dimension, we are going to encounter some kind of paradox. It is true, of course, that it does take time to live in the, to learn to live in the now.

What that means is that continuously you're not in the now and you lose the now, which is access to the timeless dimension of consciousness. You lose access to it and you're back in your life situation, back in your mind, back in time where past and future are completely obliterate the present moment, a normal state, in other words, and you become a normal human being again, somewhat mad, which is normal. So the learning to live in the now, yes, there's a little bit of a paradox here because it takes time to be at home in the now and to live it continuously so that you don't lose the now anymore and go into the dream world of not now.

So that you bring in the timeless dimension into the dimension of time. And when the two come together, you will encounter, when you put it into words, you'll encounter some form of paradox. That's fine, that's fine.

The important thing is realizing that awakening is not about achieving some future state. The intensity needs to be directed not towards wanting to reach a future, because many spiritual seekers have great intensity, they work very hard, they might meditate four hours a day, and they're really determined to get there. And they don't, they never do, because their intensity flows into future, into their mind.

But the same intensity can be directed into the present moment. So that is bringing together two seemingly conflicting approaches to awakening. One says, there's nothing you can do, any effort will just take you away from it.

And the other approach says, you need to want awakening as a drowning man wants air, otherwise you won't get there. So you have the two, some teachers will tell you there's nothing you can do. It comes when it comes.

Just be here now. Enjoy yourself. The other says, oh, no, you have to really work really hard, like the drowning man.

And so you get these conflicting viewpoints. But you can put the two together. But the intensity of the drowning man who wants air or woman, the intensity of the drowning person who wants air can be directed into the now rather than into an some idea of future.

So you become intensely present now. That's that that means you don't need the future anymore. The intensity moves into the vertical dimension, rather than losing itself in the horizontal dimension.

So for spiritual seekers, for most spiritual seekers who haven't arrived yet, they may have intensity, or others have no intensity at all, and they fall asleep in front of the TV waiting for enlightenment to happen. So that doesn't work either. Some intensity is necessary, but not the intensity that moves into the future, but the intensity of presence.

And when a challenge comes into your life, two things can happen. Either the challenge

pulls you into old unconscious reactive patterns, and you start complaining and resisting and fighting and dreadful things happening, or a challenge can awaken you. So for example, let's say your stockbroker sends a statement, or your mutual fund sends a statement, you open it and you see your investments have become reduced in value by 65%.

You can become unhappy and make up stories in your mind about how difficult your life has now become, and how difficult your life is going to be the next few years, and how futile it has been to work so hard and to try and save all that money as a security for the future, and it's all evaporating into nothingness and how dreadful it all is. And think about it and talk to others about it and feel the corresponding emotions arising in your body. In other words, the challenge has pulled you into unconsciousness, completely lost the now, completely lost the aliveness of now.

Or the challenge can awaken you. You see, oh, you see the figure on the page. Oh, that's what it is.

And you accept this moment as it is, without building stories around it, and become intensely present. So the intensity of, you need to have intensity when a challenge comes, or a challenging person, a very unconscious person trying to drag you into some kind of conflict. Very easy to succumb to that.

It happens in politics all the way, all the time. One unconscious terrorist pulls the whole administration into unconsciousness. We may talk about that.

So use a challenge to wake you up into that alertness that is so different from the normal state of reactive thinking. Absolutely alert in the now. Whenever the mind comes in and creates some form of unhappiness for yourself, because that's how unhappiness is created.

Unhappiness is not created from the situation. It's created from what your mind is telling you about the situation. So if you, you can observe that process in yourself.

It's not the situation. The situation is neutral. The mental commentary about your situation, life situation, whatever situation you encounter, the mental commentary is what produces the feeling of unhappiness.

The mind judges the situation as not good, not good enough, or is threatened by it, or imagines a future that's not going to be satisfactory, and so on. So the, it's not the situation, but the mental commentary that creates that unhappiness that is so normal for most people. And they don't realize it, because they confuse what their mind is saying about a situation with the actual situation.

It starts with the simplest thing, like saying it's a dreadful day today, because there are drops of water coming from the sky, and it's gray, the sky is gray, and so what a dreadful

day. You've already confused the simplicity of what is with your judgment of what is. So you call the day dreadful.

And that's a, it's a tiny thing to do, but, and then of course it flows into almost everything. And so you, you cannot see that everything's, the simple is-ness of the present moment, always the moment is as it is, the rest you add to it. And to see that the moment always is as it is, there's great power in that, that you don't need to have some kind of reactive relationship with what is.

That's superfluous, it's dysfunctional. And that's, so this is what every master, every Zen master teaches, that simplicity of being with what is. People try to study Zen and they go to monasteries and can't figure it out even after 20 years.

Why? Because it's too simple. What is now is, that's Zen, be completely with what is and you're immediately a Zen master.

If you want to be a Zen master, it's a good profession, then just decide that I'm, I'll just be with what is every moment. You got it. You're there, you don't need time anymore.

No time is needed to be with what is. So here we have the paradox. Now, of course, in this dimension of time, it's very rare that somebody enters that state and never leaves it again.

So you might decide as you sit here, okay, I'm going to be a Zen master, from now on I'm going to be with what is, totally. And I'm not going to add superfluous mind stuff to what is. I'll be with what is and I'll respond to what is, out of presence, out of that alert presence, and it'll be wonderful.

No more problems for the rest of my life. Of course, it's true. And so you walk out of here or wherever you are, and then probably before you reach home, a minor challenge will present itself, if only in the form of, it's still raining.

It's been raining for days. Why am I living in this climate? You're beginning to lose it.

The master is no longer a master. Because once you start with that little thought, another one comes about my life. Maybe this thing about the present isn't really working.

And so you go, oh, I lost it. I thought I was going to be a Zen master. I have to think of something else.

And so you need time. You need time because you lost it and then you need time to get to learn to live in such a way because you continuously lose it. All patterns, mind patterns come up and take you over again.

Habitual mind patterns come up and pull you wherever they want to go. Now, if you had

absolute intensity of presence, and it's possible, it is possible that someone who listens to this, perhaps you or you or you, you okay, are going to remain present with such intensity that the old patterns just cannot take you over anymore. Then all you can feel is the old patterns wanting to come in and saying, hi, here, come, come here.

Worry about this. You have to worry about this. And you say, no, I'll just be present with what is.

There's no problem now. I'm not going to worry. If I have to think about something practical, then I'll think in a focused way.

But I'm not going to be taken over by my mind. Okay, returning to presence. And then there will be another attempt, a little challenge happens in the traffic or wherever.

It is this driver is like a gust of wind. Why personalize a driver that does something to you? Well, you wouldn't personalize a gust of wind and complain about the gust of wind that pushes your car this way or that way.

It just is a natural phenomenon. And so simply you are with what is. If there's an unconscious driver, that's just, that's what is.

There's no inner self that is complaining about it. You remain present, you remain the master. If you had that intensity, then the mind would never take you over again.

And you would have your new career as a spiritual master. Or just be free of unhappiness, and that's enough. But you cannot not be a master and affect everybody around you if you live in that state.

Whether you want to or not, it may not be a formal spiritual teacher. You will, you always teach your state of consciousness. If you're unconscious, you teach unconsciousness.

And you will pull others into unconsciousness. It happens continuously. So I sometimes use this paradox.

You need time to awaken or to be enlightened or to be free. You need time until you realize that you don't need time. As long as you believe you need time, you need time.

And then a moment comes when you realize, I don't nearly need time to be who I am. I am who I am already. I am who I am.

The formless essence of who I am cannot change. So time is not needed. The full realization of that might take you time.

[Speaker 8] (8:20:44 - 8:22:11)

I've been doing what you suggest about bringing Presence into everyday life for about

five weeks now. And I'm doing it more often and staying longer. And at one time, I noticed that when it came time to go back to work, it was like I had some difficulty getting back to work.

And I had the thought that, wow, what if I get stuck in stillness? How am I going to be able to do my job? And later I realized that it wasn't that I was going to get stuck and couldn't get back, but that I didn't want to leave.

I didn't want to go back there. So the thought came to me as I get more deeper into that place of stillness, is what I'd like to call it. How do you think without thinking?

If I leave my thinking mind behind and go into this place, which I'm recognizing as my home, and it's going to become more so, I'll be identified with that. How do I essentially think without thinking? Now, yesterday you brought up balance between the world of form and the formlessness.

Well, that's what I want a picture drawn of. How do I do that? Do I put stillness in the background while I do these things?

Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (8:22:18 - 8:35:08)

As this dimension arises, at first it tends to arise more when one is not engaged in activity so much, but actually sitting still or being still in nature, not being challenged by the world. So at first it arises more in moments when you're not being disturbed by the world. As one woman said to me on a retreat, he said, when I'm alone in my room, I can be very spiritual.

I'm so spiritual alone in my room. But the moment I go out into the world, I seem to lose it. And of course that's the challenge, but it's a good start.

At least you can be spiritual in your room, as she puts it. But that she meant present. And so there's a shift happening that enables you gradually to bring presence or stillness also into activities.

One good way of learning to do that is to do certain movements and so that stillness flows into physical movement. Kim will tell you more about that and practice with those who would like to do that. And this is very helpful.

Stillness does not require you to sit still. At first it may be helpful to sit still and then allow stillness to arise. But the next step is to get up, to move somewhere, move from here to the table and pick up a glass of water in presence without making any step into a means to an end.

Be fully there in every step. Or you get up to answer the phone. Another little mini

meditation that I recommend to people is whenever the phone rings, don't rush to the phone.

Let it ring a couple of times before you get up or go towards the phone. Don't be the slave of the external demand of that object in consciousness. Let it ring and twice is fine.

Nobody's going to hang up just because it takes two more rings. If necessary you have to reprogram the answering machine so that it doesn't answer too soon. Let it ring a couple of times then go and answer it.

Then you're not reacting to the phone and many people when the phone rings there's already an uneasy feeling inside them because you never know what it's going to be. So let it ring twice, be there and then you can still carry the presence with you even as you answer the phone. Gradually something happens that every person who has achieved mastery in any area will tell you that mastery implies that there is relatively little thinking involved.

You develop the ability to look at a situation without breaking it down conceptually into bits and pieces and attempting to arrive at some kind of decision. There's a more powerful way of dealing with situations where you look and so when you look at a situation it may be an actual visual looking but there's a when I say look there's a wider implication. I mean directing your attention to something without breaking it down into this, this, this, this.

You take in the totality of the situation. This just means you're applying. It's very different from the normal way of dealing with things and so at first it may be a little awkward.

It's like a new way of walking, a new way of being in the world. At first you may only use it in relatively simple situations and then gradually you apply it to all situations. So something arises and you look and you immediately know what it is that is needed in that situation but this looking is unconditioned intelligence being applied to that space to hear what's happening in front of you.

That's how anybody, any great artist or great musician, he is completely present and not mentally analyzing anything or preparing it through the mind but completely present and then action happens. It comes out of the presence. There's a strange thing you can do just little things knowing without labeling it mentally.

You can, for example, it sounds a little silly almost, you can look at a clock or watch that especially if it doesn't have numbers on it and just find out if you can know what time it is without verbalizing in your mind what time it is. So when you look at it and then this is, you don't have to do it here but do it at home, just you look at it, you can know something without it becoming words in your mind. That's the strange thing that there's

a knowing that is non-conceptual and that is a very powerful thing to apply that to any situation and if you go, for example, into a meeting of course you know the facts that you need to know, that's a different matter, but without preparing what you're going to say.

Don't prepare what you're going to say. Jesus already told us that when you're going to speak, don't prepare it. The Holy Spirit will move through you when you speak and he will speak from that.

I'm not quoting literally but more or less that's what he said. You don't need to know beforehand what you're going to say and if there's enormous power in that, if you ever experience the two situations having prepared your speech and speaking spontaneously, you see the enormous qualitative difference, the difference in power, provided that you are not paralyzed by fear when you speak and you don't have a script. If you can accept that primordial state of not knowing conceptually, if you can accept, become comfortable with not knowing in many, many situations.

Let's just take, you have to give a speech, become comfortable with not knowing as you stand or sit there, then begin to speak. It happened to somebody I once knew who went to give a talk and he left behind his lecture notes and then he arrived there and at first it was very awkward. He almost cancelled.

He said, I can't give it and then he first apologized to his audience and then he stumbled and after five minutes suddenly a flow started and it was the most powerful speech he had ever given. Another example of that is when I was at university, we had one professor who was loved by all students. He was the only one who would give his lectures without any notes.

The others had notes that were, in some cases, had used the same lecture notes for 25-30 years. You could see they were all old. They'd been reading these lectures year after year and there was this man who every lecture was, when he talked about literature, all he would have is he would have the book there that he was talking about, no notes.

He would just flick through and then look at a line there and then talked. Wow, every lecture was fresh and new. And then I graduated from that university that was in London and two years later I was in Cambridge doing research as for PhD, which I never finished, but that's another story, and he got invited as a guest lecturer and I was so happy.

I told everybody, there's this wonderful person who's coming and he's going to give a talk. So everybody came. So he came up and to my astonishment and disappointment, he came with notes.

He thought giving a lecture at Cambridge was such an important thing he just couldn't improvise and it was the weakest talk he'd ever given. So not trusting, not being able to

trust in that deeper intelligence that can actually move through you. And so any sports person knows that if any thought interferes you're not in the zone.

You're in the zone when there's no mind activity. There's simply looking and action, looking and action. Whether it's hitting a ball, many sports kind of, you hit a ball of one kind or another or you throw a ball.

And I've often wondered why do people watch that? I can see why people play it, but why do people watch it? And the only answer I can have is perhaps they love seeing somebody who is in presence and they love to see that energy that's behind it that moves through them.

Although I'm sure it's much better to play yourself than to watch. So if you want to watch a film that's about that, it's called The Legend of Bagger Vance. It's about somebody who is very good at playing golf and then he loses it.

He goes to the war and when he comes back from the war he's lost the ability to play golf. And then he finds a teacher, he's really a spiritual teacher, who teaches him to play golf again. And really what he's teaching him is to be present, to be completely utterly present.

And that's beautifully conveyed in the film when the power finally, far greater power than when he was playing golf naturally, now his presence flows into, and one or two shots in the film are just beautiful, when he looks into the distance and his mind is totally still and then he goes and his mind remains totally still and then the ball falls and lands in the hole, whatever it's called. I don't know much about golf except I know that the ball has to go into the hole. To a limited extent, even when you're driving, oh that's a nice tune.

It's all part of our meditation. There's nothing that is not part of our meditation.

[Speaker 11] (8:35:10 - 8:35:11)

Nothing wrong.

[Speaker 1] (8:35:21 - 8:53:43)

To a limited extent, even when you're learning to drive, I remember when I learned to drive at a relatively late age, in my late, no, my early 30s I think I learned to drive. Yes, that's right, 31 or so, 30. They, so it takes a little longer and because you're analysing situations.

Situations. Okay, is this road, is there enough space for the car to get through? There's cars parked there and there's another car coming in opposite direction.

Should I stop or should I carry on? What do I do? I asked the instructor, what do I do?

He said, okay, just stop the car, stop the car. He got scared. And then hesitating, I'm putting foot on the brake, no, accelerator.

Should I go forward? He said, oh my God. And then the driving test came and he waited while I was taking the test and then the miracle happened.

I passed. And when I told him I passed, he said, you passed? And then I still couldn't drive really, but I passed.

And then gradually then no conceptual thinking happened. And this is a very limited area. You drive because you look and you know what you have to do.

You're not analysing the situation anymore, completely different way of driving. And this is probably the reason why even to this day, the most powerful computer in the world that ever been built cannot drive a car from one point of the city to another point in the city. No computer as yet is capable of that.

And if he were, you wouldn't trust him because there's so many unforeseeable situations that continuously arise. And the concept by breaking information down into bits and pieces, it just isn't powerful enough. There is a vaster intelligence that does not require the breakdown of reality into conceptual bits and pieces.

This is why I smiled when I saw the robot from the future in the film with Arnold Schwarzenegger, Terminator 2, for example, where you sometimes see the robot, how the robot perceives the world and the robot has a screen. And when the robot goes into a situation, on the screen, the situation is broken down into information like man approaching, wearing a machine gun, weight, level of threat, nine and a half, action to be taken. So it goes, and then finally he goes into action.

But it would be far too slow. Any human looking and acting is far more powerful than anybody whose actions are based on conceptual analysis that may have its place for certain things. But even the greatest scientists have known that the insights came not through further conceptual analysis.

They tried, they worked on problems conceptually, but finally there was a giving up on that level of looking and there was an opening up of spaciousness. They were not looking for the answer anymore. And then the realizations came.

Einstein had the greatest realizations that could not even be verified. He didn't know if it was true, but it came from a deep level and years later experiments were performed and astronomers verified that the things that came to him were actually the case. And here we have an example, Einstein, of a human being who is not excessively dominated by, he has a powerful intellect, but not totally dominated by the intellect, relatively free, almost completely free of ego.

A person who in his childhood was considered by some people at school to be mentally retarded because he was so slow. This is not what our society values. Our society values quick answers.

Who knows the answer? I know, I know. And Einstein was just sitting there because he went much deeper even then.

And he learned to speak at a relatively late age. And so some humans naturally have that ability more than others, but everybody can invite that into their lives and realize that there is another way of dealing with situations, with reality, with relationships. You move away from excessive conceptualization and thinking and then you are able to use non-conceptual intelligence.

It's not so much that you use it, it comes through you. Non-conceptual intelligence, that's creative intelligence, and that cannot be measured in IQ tests. So IQ tests can only measure how you handle conceptual intelligence, but they cannot measure your degree of alignment with non-conceptual intelligence.

It's a totally different thing. But this is where human creativity arises. You may, in some cases, it may then be expressed through concepts, but the insight didn't come through analysis.

And so what we are learning to do as presence arises is to analyze relatively little, to define conceptually, intellectually less and less situations and just be there as an alert presence in the situation rather than a conceptualizing mind. And that brings about an enormous improvement in relationships when the judgments that your mind habitually uses to deal with people are not there anymore. And you meet another human being through non-conceptual intelligence, through non-judgment, just be there as the space.

You look at another human being and there's just the present space in which you look. There's no, you don't call this human being anything. It's a beautiful thing of relating because you're relating to something deeper, coming from something deeper in yourself than the conceptual mind.

You're relating beyond the conceptual mind of the other person. The other person may still be judging you, that's okay, but you go, it's like linking into something deeper in the other human being. And stillness is part of that.

You're still, while you look at the other human being, you're still, you're present, you're listening, you're looking. And then you may be speaking, not preparing the next thing you're going to say. It comes, it's fresh and new every time.

And so everywhere, wherever you go, this is a wonderful practice. Some things like using the first stage of learning something new often implies learning a few things stage by stage. I cannot go, for example, I cannot walk up to a musical instrument and say, okay,

I'm going to be totally present and then something, a wonderful piece of music is going to come out of me.

It's not going to happen. I can sit at the piano. If I haven't learned how to play the piano, it's not going to happen.

The first stage is often you learn a few things bit by bit, technique. Nobody can achieve mastery by improving the technique more and more and more. At some point, technique is transcended and then presence arises.

This applies to anything, dance. If I wanted to learn to dance, be a great dancer, I could do some spontaneous movements. It might look quite nice, but it would not.

I'd have to learn certain things first and then go on to the next dimension from there. The dimension of presence can then flow into that. If I wanted to be a great physicist, theoretical physicist, like Einstein or Stephen Hawking, I can't start scribbling mathematical symbols and solve the problem of the universe.

No, I would have to learn first. It would take a few years. Once I've mastered that, then the next dimension, if that doesn't come in, I will just be maybe a research scientist, but nothing new will come through.

As always, mastery implies the arising of presence. That means the conceptual, the analytical becomes secondary. It may still be used, but it becomes secondary.

Doing things without thinking. Basically, we're talking about transcending thought as reliance on thought. Presence is going beyond thought.

That's an amazing shift. It doesn't mean thought doesn't happen at all. Thought still happens within that vast space of presence, but something far more powerful takes over.

There are spiritual teachings. Many people have listened to, for example, teachers like Krishnamurti. He has spoken for many, many years.

People are just saying, what is the essence of that? What is he actually saying? Of course, it can be summarized in one sentence.

He never said it. Stop thinking. Don't fall below thought.

Rise above thought. That's where the teaching comes from. Any spiritual teaching comes from there.

But Krishnamurti was a teacher who taught through negative, like Buddhism, can the mind know the answer to this, he asked. Let's investigate how far the mind can go. And so, through showing you what the mind cannot do, that the truth actually then emerges

in the same way that the Buddha taught.

He made no positive statements. He talked about the unmanifested, the uncreated, the unborn. He didn't say God.

And so, making that into an idol is much more difficult than somebody who has a positive teaching and talks about God. You can very easily make God into a mental idol, a mental construct, not realizing that you believe in a mind construct and that the reality is far deeper than that. The uncreated, you can't really, the unmanifested, the unborn, you can't really say, I believe in the unborn or the uncreated.

It's harder to do. Or Buddhism talks about the deathless realm rather than eternal life, as Jesus taught in positive terms. Buddhism says the deathless realm.

And again, it's much harder to make these things into belief structures in Buddhism. That was the great wisdom of the Buddha. He knew the tendency of the human mind of transforming concepts into idols and believing in them and then believing that that was it.

And so, he avoided that. And so, he never mentioned the word God. And that was probably an extremely wise thing to do.

And yet, centuries passed for about, I believe, 600 years or so after the death of the Buddha, there were no Buddha statues. But then people suddenly found, oh, we need a little reminder. And then they created Buddha statues.

Not that they are not wonderful. Every Buddha statue symbolizes, if you know what it is, it symbolizes a state of consciousness. It points to a state of consciousness.

It's not the statue of somebody who once lived. It stands for a state of consciousness. And so, as a reminder, it's fine.

You can use that. But gradually, in popular Buddhism, the Buddha became virtually a god, almost. They don't call him a god, but virtually.

And so, the human mind has a tendency of looking for some form, to create some form to believe in. And then, of course, you lose yourself in the form. And the very essence of the Buddhist teaching is the formless, the emptiness behind and within all forms.

Krishnamurti said he would sometimes go for a walk. He would go for a walk every day in wherever he was, in Ojai, or in Switzerland, or in England. And there would be virtually no thought while he was going for a walk for an hour or two hours.

His mind would be virtually untouched by any thought, just presence, just looking. He wrote a beautiful book. I believe it's called his Notebook, where he wrote down how he perceived nature during his walks.

And every walk is fresh and new. Every description for every day is fresh and new, because there was no past in his perceptions. A bell, form arising as a sound, and just space of consciousness is left.

Form subsides. What's left? Nothing except that.

Form arises, attention to the sound, no more sound, just attention. One more time. And as you listen, can you be aware of the presence in which the sound arises?

And now just tension left, just presence left.

[Speaker 6] (8:54:30 - 8:55:17)

My question is around the issue of psychiatric medications and awakening. We have talked about this issue on ETT Forum. It is an issue in my life situation and the life situation of many others on the Forum.

Some believe they need to go after medications to awaken, and others say without the medication, they would not have enough clarity to even begin to bring presence in their lives. My question is, can a person take psychiatric medication and still awaken? Will psychiatric medication hold a person back or slow down the awakening process?

[Speaker 1] (8:55:19 - 8:55:39)

Thank you. Thank you. May I ask a personal question?

Are you on medication?

[Speaker 2] (8:55:40 - 8:55:40)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (8:55:41 - 9:07:16)

But you're also here. That is already part of the answer. Because for you to be here, there must be some inner recognition of awareness.

And so despite whatever the medication is, or whatever their condition, your condition is, there is an arising of awareness. So it's easier for me to answer this question because you are standing there than an abstract question. You are living proof.

I'm not saying necessarily you don't experience periods when you are taken over by whatever patterns there are in the mind. But there is an opening into awareness, which is not the case with many people who are not on medication or who are considered normal. They are not standing here.

Many of them are not and wouldn't be. In them, there is no opening. So one cannot say

categorically under this or that condition, awareness cannot arise, awakening cannot happen.

As a general rule, before anybody seeks help of that kind, I would advise to explore other possibilities. If you wish to gradually become free of medication, which in many cases can obscure the awareness that wants to arise, you would need to do it with a physician who is relatively conscious. There are some.

There are maybe twofold questions. One question is, with medication, is awareness able to come through? And of course, that depends what kind of medication, or over what period of time, and other factors.

But in some cases, I believe it is. In other cases, it's not. It can obscure the awareness.

The other question is, a certain mental, what is diagnosed as mental illness, can awareness arise there? And again, that depends on the nature of the illness. Sometimes in the West, shifts in consciousness are misinterpreted.

If they happen suddenly, they can be misinterpreted and misdiagnosed by a physician. And Western physicians, because they're conditioned by the Western system, have no idea of shifts in consciousness. It's not part of the medical model.

There are no shifts in consciousness in psychiatry. You can either, you are normal, but normal, of course, is insane, but they don't know that. Or you are illness, you're diseased, the mind is ill.

There are people who are put on medication, unfortunately, children sometimes, in increasing numbers, in whom there may simply be a change in consciousness happening. There are children who, for the most absurd reasons, are put on medication just to keep them quiet. And people like who in India, Ramana Maharshi, the Indian sage, who when he was 17, 16 or 17, suddenly did something that in the West would have been regarded as a sign of severe mental illness.

He left his home, he went to, took a train, and he sat down by a temple and stopped doing anything, didn't even put food in his mouth, just sat. And of course, in the West, they would have put him away. And in India, they respected it and allowed him to sit there and fed him, people came.

And after a few years, he started to speak again. And it turned out that he was awakened, he had awakened. But the shift was so sudden that he became dysfunctional for a while, from a normal viewpoint, became dysfunctional, couldn't operate anymore in the world.

So this can happen to people sometimes, and it's totally misinterpreted. So often, what is called medical psychiatric illness, not always can be a misdiagnosed shift in

consciousness. At other times, there is actually a condition there with which it would be very difficult to live.

Many types of so-called schizophrenia, again, schizophrenia is a huge term which can be applied if you don't know what exactly is wrong, you call it schizophrenia, it's almost like that. The same way in the physical body, it's a viral infection, they don't really know, but this is a term that covers a lot of things, it's a viral infection. Oh, now I know what it is.

And then schizophrenia, now I know what it is. In many cases, it is true that in mental illness, the very cause of the illness can be total identification with certain mental movements, lack of awareness. I've had limited success when I worked with people one-on-one some years ago.

I had some people who had forms of schizophrenia who came to see me who were on medication, and by sitting with them and pointing to the possibility of awareness, they were able to become free and eventually also become free of the medication. For example, I remember one case, a woman came to see me who had severe auditory hallucinations, so-called voices. And again, we don't even know whether the entities actually are talking to her, it's possible, but it really comes to the same thing, whether it's thoughts in her head that take the form of a voice that she hears, the voice tells her to do something, it's very insistent, or several voices sometimes, very insistent, telling her to do this, do that, and enormous energy behind that voice.

And the way I approached it was to point out the possibility of not giving, not paying attention to the content of what the voice says, but simply to be aware that there is a voice speaking and that it is a voice in the head, it is a thought, I called it a thought, maybe it's something else, but it comes to the same thing. It's a thought, it's a voice, whatever it says, you say there's a voice, be the awareness for the voice, don't fight it, be the awareness so that the voice, you don't do what the voice says because you disregard the content. So if the voice says, you are God, say thank you, there's a voice again.

If the voice says you are the devil, thank you, there's the voice again. You are the awareness for the voice, disregard the content. Then gradually the voice lost its power because she disregarded the content of the voice, awareness grew.

So ultimately the healing in any case is awareness. So awareness can arise in the strangest circumstances and to people you would never have predicted could arise to, and that includes even people who have a so-called psychiatric disorder or who are on medication, it can happen. Nobody can categorically say that it cannot happen.

In some cases, those people are closer than normal people. As you know, there was a movement in psychiatry in the 60s and 70s where they, it was called anti-psychiatry, where it was recognized that often psychiatric conditions are really something else. So

it's really, it is simple in your case that obviously despite the medication, you are here and something, a shift is happening inside you.

Nothing can stand against the power of awareness ultimately because the power of awareness is the power of the evolution of the universe itself. So nothing really that, it will, it seeks the slightest opening and it can come through that. So I would say that trust that as it's happening, it will continue to happen for you.

And there may be a point when with help, the medication won't be needed anymore as awareness grows, but you need somebody who is conscious to help you with that, a physician who is conscious to help you with that. It's wonderful to see that it is working.

[Speaker 6] (9:07:19 - 9:07:23)

It's helped that I've disidentified from it.

[Speaker 1] (9:07:23 - 9:07:23)

Yes.

[Speaker 6] (9:07:24 - 9:07:26)

And I'm able to be the witness.

[Speaker 1] (9:07:26 - 9:07:28)

Yes, that's the power.

[Speaker 6] (9:07:28 - 9:07:35)

It's been, my symptoms, less power over me. Yes. Knowing that I'm not that.

[Speaker 1] (9:07:38 - 9:08:07)

That's right. So that's the key, to be the witness, to be the awareness for whatever it is. It's wonderful.

So I'm very grateful. I'm glad you asked the question. And I'm sure there'll be many people who are in a similar position have the same question.

So yes, it is possible. It is possible. Thanks.

Thank you. Thanks.

[Speaker 7] (9:08:38 - 9:09:06)

Eckhart, my question is around surrender. I'm curious. Once the egoic shell has cracked open and the light of consciousness is peeking through, can the ego surrender itself to

that light of consciousness or ultimately must it be surrendered?

[Speaker 1] (9:09:17 - 9:11:11)

The ego, I often talk of the ego as if it were an entity. It's not really an entity. It acts as if it were an entity.

It seems to be an entity that has taken possession of you. But ultimately what it is, it's only a particular way of your mind to function, an identification with the mind. So the ego itself is that dysfunctional way in which the mind works.

And when that comes to an end, the dysfunctional way cannot put an end to its own dysfunction. It can only dissolve when awareness arises. Awareness is not thought.

Awareness is consciousness prior to thought. And you'll realize that you are that, and whatever the mind produces and says are thoughts. But the thoughts are then no longer endowed with a sense of self.

And that's the end of the ego. When you no longer identify with every thought that comes, that's the end of the ego. So that's what happens.

So I don't know in the way you formulate the question, the ego cannot dissolve itself, but in the light of awareness, it dissolves.

[Speaker 7] (9:11:13 - 9:11:18)

Then what is that willingness to allow it to be seen?

[Speaker 1] (9:11:19 - 9:14:20)

That willingness is the evolutionary impulse of the universe which created the ego in the first place in order to transcend it now. It was an evolutionary step for mankind. The ego was an enormous step for mankind, a great thing.

And then it came or is coming now to the end of its lifespan. That particular evolutionary movement or manifestation that we call ego, it had a lifespan. It has outlived its usefulness now.

We have learned a lot through it, and now it needs to go. And that's always a critical stage. The transition from one state of consciousness to another is always critical.

There could be a falling back. There could be, we're at this transitional stage where the ego now needs to dissolve. The caterpillar has come to the end of its useful life as a caterpillar.

It's been fine. If the caterpillar was happy for a while, crawling up the tree and eating the leaves, now there are no leaves left on the tree. And it's time for the caterpillar to cease

being a caterpillar and turn into something incredible.

That little slimy thing. Suddenly, it doesn't know what's happening to it. Caterpillar doesn't say, I must become a butterfly or I'm trying to become a butterfly.

But the caterpillar suddenly notices that crawling is becoming more and more difficult. And it's looking for leaves. It's eaten all the leaves of the tree so there's nothing else to eat anyway.

If it doesn't change now into a butterfly, it'll die. So that's what's happening to humans. The shift to a different evolutionary level or dimension.

This is us being here, that's all part of it. It's part of the shift. The butterfly is emerging right here.

The caterpillar is not totally gone yet. It's the transitional period. Thanks.

Even you can notice in every one of you, sometimes you're still a caterpillar and at other times, you're already a butterfly. Present, aware, non-reactive, aligned with the present moment.

[Speaker 5] (9:14:41 - 9:14:54)

Hi. Can your body movement practice help people with Asperger's syndrome become more in tune with their bodies and less in their minds?

[Speaker 3] (9:15:01 - 9:15:10)

I'm not too familiar with Asperger's syndrome. I know that it's some form of autism.

[Speaker 5] (9:15:11 - 9:16:09)

Correct, yes. I live with my daughter who's 20 who has it. And a lot of times, they get so pent up with sensory perceptions that are bombarding them right and left because their mind doesn't process like ours.

And they tend to be more physically aggressive, not in public, but at home. And that is how they express themselves sometimes. So how does she show her aggression physically?

Maybe by kicking things in or screaming a lot, just like a primal scream. Or crying incessantly because she can't put it in words. She can't get the feelings out.

And I've been bombarding her all day.

[Speaker 3] (9:16:11 - 9:16:35)

It's kind of like most of us. We can't get our feelings out. Exactly.

But a lot of us have developed a very skilled way of pushing it and holding it down. And she's expressing it. So she doesn't express it in public, but she expresses it at home.

Sometimes she'll express it in public.

[Speaker 5] (9:16:35 - 9:16:41)

She might say something to somebody that we wouldn't normally say to somebody in public.

[Speaker 3] (9:16:42 - 9:17:45)

Right. Kind of like the dog dragging its leg. Exactly.

Exactly. Yeah. I don't know whether the movement practice that I do will help because I haven't worked with anybody that has Asperger's.

But the practice that I do teach and that any qigong or yoga teacher would teach, well, maybe not any, but is practicing presence, is beginning to cultivate, develop those yin qualities. So that may help to get in touch with her body. And does she do any sort of form of exercise?

[Speaker 5] (9:17:45 - 9:18:04)

She'll walk once in a while. She walks, which helps a lot. Yeah.

But it's hard for her to go inside her body. But the thing that's helped so far is to just be present with her when she's feeling it.

[Speaker 3] (9:18:05 - 9:18:46)

But she can't do that very well herself yet. To be present and just feel it. My guess is she probably is feeling it.

She's just not able to communicate, perhaps, what it is she's feeling. And just maybe and articulate it, right? She just feels it.

And then like a child, then when she feels something, if she's feeling angry, she'll just get angry. Mm-hmm. They just word out things and just say things, as a child would.

Well, she might not say it, but she holds it in. She holds it in. It stays inside.

[Speaker 5] (9:18:47 - 9:18:47)

So maybe it's...

[Speaker 3] (9:18:49 - 9:19:14)

So from what I understand of Asperger's is really is then the therapy of some sort of behavioral therapy to be able to, I wouldn't say control, but somehow teach them ways that they can express themselves appropriately, right?

[Speaker 5] (9:19:14 - 9:19:16)

When they're younger, yeah.

[Speaker 3] (9:19:16 - 9:19:20)

When they're younger. And did she get this when she was younger?

[Speaker 5] (9:19:21 - 9:19:39)

She did. And they also did occupational therapy with touch, you know, hard sensory rubbing on the skin or something like that. But it's still pretty much...

It's just that frustration and the pent-up anger that explodes.

[Speaker 3] (9:19:40 - 9:19:48)

Can I ask you, are you able to accept her just as she is?

[Speaker 5] (9:19:48 - 9:20:18)

No, that's my biggest... I mean, I, in my mind, say I do. But I know that I still see her as a normal, quote, normal person because there's a part of her that's very normal and there's a part of her that's very Asperger's or autistic.

And I have a hard time seeing that and forgiving that and being okay with that.

[Speaker 3] (9:20:19 - 9:20:29)

I want her to be like me. So perhaps that's the real work. That's the real work.

It's me. Not about the therapy of having her corrected, but... Yes.

[Speaker 5] (9:20:29 - 9:20:42)

In fact, that's what I spent most of my time doing this weekend, was how can I, what can I do to allow her to be who she is?

[Speaker 3] (9:20:44 - 9:20:54)

Can you allow yourself to be who you are? Not very well, but I'm trying. I'm working on that.

Yeah, good.

[Speaker 5] (9:20:55 - 9:21:01)

Thank you. That's a big answer for me because it confirms kind of what's going on here.

[Speaker 3] (9:21:02 - 9:22:16)

Yeah, so maybe part of the thing that she's feeling too is that non-acceptance. Like, hey, I am who I am. Why can't you just love me for who I am?

Exactly, exactly. Thank you. You're on your way.

Thank you. Oh, if we can all just let go and be who we are. And then love those and allow those to be who they are.

And full blossoming will happen. Then we will express the infinite ways that consciousness wants to express itself through each individual form.

[Speaker 9] (9:22:41 - 9:23:47)

Start my question with a little background. My mother was diagnosed schizophrenic about 40 years ago. And she's been medicated ever since.

And she's stable most of the time right now. But I've always wanted her to take it a step further and see her happier. And I've always asked her to go see a therapist and find the next level.

And she's always refused until just recently she came to me and said she was ready to check out some options. And it just so happens that I found the power of now just a couple weeks before and had fallen in love and had actually witnessed it help someone else. So my question is, do you think that the teachings are something that can help people with a mental illness as severe as schizophrenia?

[Speaker 1] (9:23:47 - 9:31:40)

Oh, thank you. Thank you. Okay.

Well, as I'm sure you know, there's a wide range of symptoms that people suffering from schizophrenia can display. And the degree of severity varies a lot too, but I believe awareness practice or witness practice in many cases can be very powerful even with schizophrenia. So for example, schizophrenia in many ways is an intensification of the normal dysfunctional state of consciousness.

So the normal state of consciousness, the state of consciousness that most people are in, that we call normal, is also dysfunctional. For example, many schizophrenic people have a very strong, they have a voice that tells them things in their head. They may hear

it even as if it were coming from the outside or they may have thoughts that seem to be autonomous, that thoughts that have a life of their own, that are very powerful.

Some may also, of course, see things that are not there. All these things, many other things can happen. And normal dysfunctional state, of course, is that you have a voice in your head.

Everybody has that. You're talking to yourself. It's an unusual self-talk.

It's a milder form of something that in a more acute form is recognized as actually insane. But everybody, to some extent, has a voice in the head, for example. So if a person who is suffering from hearing voices, either in the head or coming from the outside, first, it needs a minimum degree of presence.

The person needs to know that there is something not right with him or her. So a minimum degree of presence, whether it is enough to tell that person there's something not right, that I hear the voices, that's necessary. As we saw, for example, in the film, which some of you may have seen, *A Beautiful Mind*, where there's a person suffering from some form of schizophrenia and he sees things that are not there.

He sees people that are not there and they tell him things. And only in the middle of the film, he suddenly becomes aware that these things are not actually there. And the film is so well done because together with him, the viewer, suddenly becomes aware that these things were not real.

Before, the viewer was as deceived as the character in the film. It's all based on a real life story. So if it can be explained to a person that apart from the thoughts that this person may hear, think, experience, there is also the knower in them, the knower of the thoughts, the witness of the thoughts.

There is a faculty in them to realize a certain voice is speaking to them, that so if it can be pointed out that the sufferer from schizophrenia can become acquainted with this and recognize the fact that there is more in him or her than the voices. And what is more is the ability to listen, to see that there is a voice, to know that there is a voice. In other words, to witness the voice.

And I've had one or two people a long time ago when I used to see individual people who had mild forms of schizophrenia and it worked with them quite well. And what I asked them to do is to pay absolutely no attention to the content of their thoughts. So whether the thought said, this is God talking to you and you should be doing this, all you need to do is to realize there's a thought arising, be the witness.

And then another voice comes, I'm the devil and you're supposed to do, and all you need to do is to witness. Don't give any credence to the content of the mind, just see a thought is arising. Buddhists do that sometimes in basic Buddhist mindful practice before

you can be absolutely present when the thought is arising.

A hateful thought arising. And instead of believing in thought, actually disregard the content and just recognize that thoughts are arising, voices are arising. You don't need to act on them because you can just be there as the witness.

And knowing that the voices can be very persistent and they may even for a little while become more persistent when they are not acknowledged. It's like a little child says, give me attention. And if you don't give attention, they start screaming.

But after a while, when you don't feed them with your attention, they subside. We also, by the way, saw that in the film when he recognized that he no longer gave attention to the delusions. He saw people that weren't there and he said, I'm not giving you attention.

And then for a while, they were sitting around in corners and then they disappeared. At first they were angry. So these are entities, really thoughts are actually, even normal thoughts are actually energy forms.

One can regard every thought as an energy formation, an entity. And you can see it with, even in normal, so-called normal people, I always say normal insane, in normal people, thoughts can sometimes be obsessive. They can take over your mind.

And these are normal people. For example, you can suddenly have a thought that a certain very strong belief, which is a thought form, can take over your mind. And then you convert to communism or you convert to some kind of belief structure.

And suddenly it takes hold and everything you see is interpreted through this one thought that has taken hold of your mind. It just grips you. There it is.

So you are in possession of a thought. You are actually possessed by this energy form. Usually thoughts come and go, but sometimes it happens that one or two thoughts grow into little monsters.

And we still call that normal. So there are people who are totally obsessed with certain belief structures. I mean, in medieval times, you had religious people, they were killing anybody who disagreed with them, basically kill them, kill them.

They disagree. That was called normal. Everybody accepted it.

All the people, the scholars, the people at the universities at the time, it was normal to kill people who disagreed with the doctrine. Just a tiny aspect of the doctrine. How many angels can fit into one room?

Ten? No, I say nine.

[Speaker 11] (9:31:41 - 9:31:45)

Okay, burn him.

[Speaker 1] (9:31:46 - 9:33:23)

They're almost like that. Or was Christ completely divine? Was he half divine or a quarter divine?

He's completely in possession of just thoughts. So the witness faculty is important. And content, you can show a person to completely disregard the content of their thoughts, just to say a thought is arising and it's just a thought.

And if it comes as an auditory thing, it means it's a thought spoken out aloud arising. That's all. So you acknowledge it's there, you remain as a witness, you don't react to it.

So that can be explained in acute forms of schizophrenia. I don't know. I have not had experience with that.

But I believe in many cases, the witness faculty is the solution. So whether you do that, I don't think there's any great danger in having a witness there if you do that, or the therapist might do it who is familiar with that. And I believe that change is possible if that is my suggestion then.

And of course, I have the same suggestion for all so-called normal people too.

[Speaker 11] (9:33:25 - 9:33:26)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (9:33:27 - 9:33:27)

Thank you.

[Speaker 7] (9:33:42 - 9:34:39)

How are you? Good. It's a pleasure to be here today.

It's my first time here. And I have to say, it almost feels a bit surreal to be in this room and you feel very connected to everyone. There's a lot of energy and you feel very connected to the source, if you will, to your own divinity.

But I'm a bit of a pragmatist. And so I say to myself, well, when I leave this room, reality sets in. And my reality, I guess to my question is, it's about unemployment.

It's about how do you, for those of us who are unemployed and seeking employment, stay connected to the source and to your own sense of divinity and still deal with the

reality and the drama and the pain of trying to find a job?

[Speaker 1] (9:34:41 - 9:42:10)

Thank you. Thank you. It's challenging.

Challenges are good, potentially. They can either wake you up, awaken you, or they can pull you into more reactivity, unconsciousness, and suffering. Every challenge that comes into your life, there's always, suddenly you can go either this way or you can go that way.

Potentially, the challenge is very helpful. Challenge means, again, a word I sometimes use, limitation in one form or another comes into your life. I'm certainly grateful for the challenges that came into my life.

I wouldn't be sitting here. And many of you probably realize that without the challenges that you encountered in your life, you wouldn't be sitting here. You'd be watching television.

This is something I have a little bit of personal experience with also. Well, maybe even quite a lot of personal experience. Because for a large part of my adult life, I was actually not employed as such, large part.

And for a large part, lived on relatively little, for a few years, on quite a few years, even in my 30s. Below the poverty line, I read that in the paper once, when it mentioned, at that time, I read the paper, it mentioned the income, a single person, below that is below the poverty line. I realized, oh, I'm much below that.

But I didn't realize I was poor. I realized that there were things I couldn't afford to buy. I could buy tomato sauce, but I couldn't buy spaghetti sauce.

Tomato sauce is cheaper, much cheaper. And that stayed with me, even for many years. As recently as four years ago, I sometimes still find myself, find myself getting tomato sauce instead of spaghetti sauce.

It's much cheaper. So here's one piece of advice for the jobless. There are practical things that then you need to readjust and deal with.

There's some action you may need to take in order to adjust to the new situation. All that is in the practical realm. Then there's the mental realm.

And in the mental realm is where the suffering could arise, not in the practical realm. There's no suffering in using, in eating spaghetti with this thin tomato sauce. Just one little example, this stands for many things, rather than a nice, specially prepared sauce for pasta.

But if you think, suddenly thought arises, and I'm just using this example to play by to many things. The thought arises, this is what it has come to. Here I said, I have to eat this watery sauce that eating the cheapest food there is.

I've lost all that, that I thought I had achieved, I have failed, probably won't find another job because millions of people are now looking for jobs. It's pointless. I'll probably have to have the same again tomorrow.

Many other kinds of thoughts arise. That's where the suffering comes from. The suffering also comes from a diminished sense of self-worth.

Now, where is that? Of course, it's in your head. The diminished sense of self-worth is because I'm now useless, and so on.

Maybe I'm too old to, nobody will employ me anymore, or whatever. I'm not a, should have had a better education. I'm no good for anything anymore.

Nobody will bond. Whatever the thoughts are, a diminished sense of self-worth, and that is because your self-worth before was derived from your function in this world, which is a very normal thing, but it wasn't really derived from your function in this world. It was derived from what your mind told you about your function in this world.

And so you derived your sense of self-worth from certain thoughts in your head, and you got perhaps some feedback from others who also told you that you are useful. You were part of that, all that interaction that people have when they have a job. You have a boss.

The boss might tell you, you're doing well. You're getting a promotion. Okay.

And the clients love you, whatever. And then you lose it, all that. And you had built up your sense of self-worth from the thoughts and the thoughts of others.

And so the opportunity now is when there is a diminished sense of self-worth to go to a deeper place where a sense of self-worth comes from that has nothing to do with what you are doing in this world or with nothing to do with what anybody tells you about yourself. A sense of self-worth of value that in other words has nothing to do with the structure of thinking. So you can use the challenge to see that if you can find something in a deeper place in you where there's something of far greater value than anything that could be derived from thinking about yourself.

So when you lose your job, very often your self image can become damaged. And that's where the suffering comes from because that is the self image is made up out of thinking. And a damaged self image can either lead you into more suffering and it will just go on and on and to pull you deeper.

And you talk to others about how dreadful it is and perhaps they'll even say, yes, you're

right and pulls you deeper and deeper. Or you step out of self-deriving your sense of who you are ultimately.

[Speaker 6] (9:42:14 - 9:42:45)

I understand how you can be in the moment and when it's a calm, peaceful moment, it's much easier to enter into a state of stillness. For somebody who's in a state of severe or prolonged psychic or physical pain, what is the process by which they learn to find some kind of stillness within that when it's so all-consuming what they desire is for it to pass more than anything else?

[Speaker 1] (9:42:45 - 9:45:16)

Yes, thank you. Sometimes people just know, they haven't heard of the possibility of acceptance of what is. They're still, the largest part of the population of our planet has not, is not even aware that such a possibility exists that you can accept a situation that usually would be called unacceptable.

And so a person really, either it happens spontaneously, there is a letting go of inner resistance because you cannot stand the pain anymore. And very often the large part of the pain is the resistance to whatever is the case. A large part of the pain is the psychological pain that says, this is dreadful.

The last few years of my mother, for example, she was occasionally I was able to bring her into stillness, but very quickly she was drawn out again by her mind. And 90% of her suffering, which was intense, the last two or three years of her life, 90% of her suffering was psychological. Yes, her body was no longer working normally.

She found it increasingly difficult to walk. Then she had to walk with the help of this device, a walker. And then her eyesight was beginning to fail.

So those, but she did not have physical pain, but she had physical discomfort and it became increasingly difficult to move from here to there by herself. That in itself would have been, yes, not pleasant, perhaps it would have been uncomfortable. The eyesight failing, yes, you can't see very clearly anymore, but that you can live with.

What you cannot live with is the enormous amount of psychological suffering that then she generated unconsciously for herself, which said, what if I go blind completely? And she spent hours and hours in terror at this thought of going blind completely.